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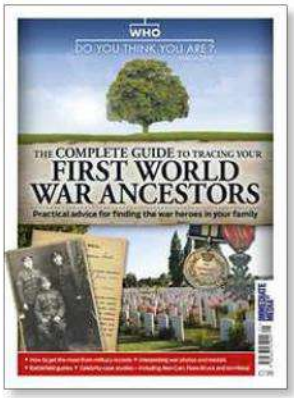
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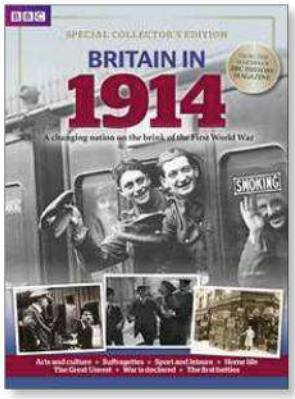
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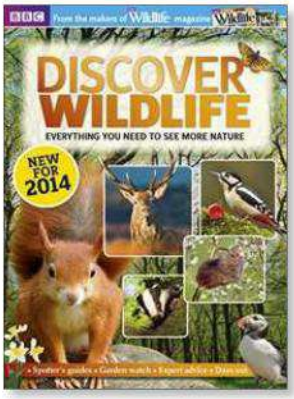
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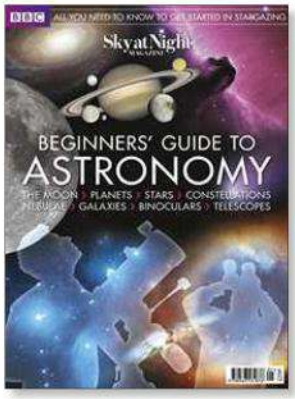
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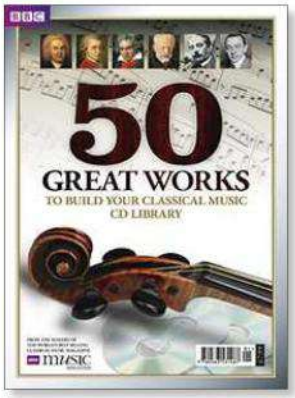
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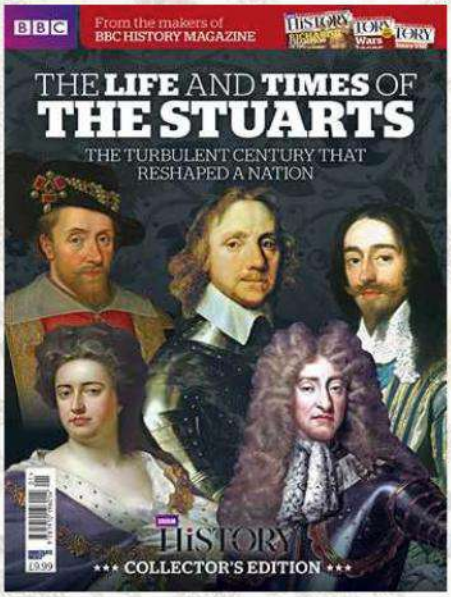
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BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

WELCOME...



Just like the Tudors who preceded them, the Stuarts reigned (over a united kingdom, at least) for little more than a century. But, as with the Tudors, their years of rule coincided with some of the **most dramatic events in British history**, incidents ranging from revolution and civil war to terrorist attacks and even the **killing of a king**.

In this special edition from the makers of *BBC History Magazine*, expert historians will guide you through this tumultuous era, revealing how the Stuarts secured their place on the throne following the death of Elizabeth I, only to be ousted by **Oliver Cromwell** before **Charles II's** triumphant return. You will find out about key moments such as the **Gunpowder Plot**, the **witch trials** and the **Act of Union**, and meet the thrilling cast of characters who populate these stories.

The Story of the Stuarts brings together articles that have appeared previously in *BBC History Magazine* along with new content commissioned specially for this edition. I hope you find it an enjoyable read – and, of course, if it whets your appetite for the period, be sure to check out regular editions of the magazine for more about this fascinating dynasty.

Rob Attar
Editor





CREDITS

EDITORIAL
Editor **Rob Attar**
Managing Editor **Nige Tassell**
Production Editor **Rebecca Candler**
Editorial Assistant **Emma Jolliffe**

ART & PICTURES
Art Editor **Lisa White**
Picture Editors **James Cutmore, Rhiannon Furbear-Williams**

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
Press Officer **Carolyn Wray 0117 314 8812**
carolyn.wray@immediate.co.uk

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager **Rob Brock**

PRODUCTION
Production Director **Sarah Powell**
Production Co-ordinator **Emily Mounter**
Reprographics **Tony Hunt, Chris Sutch**

PUBLISHING
Publishers **Andrew Davies, Dave Musgrove**
Publishing Director **Andy Healy**
Managing Director **Andy Marshall**
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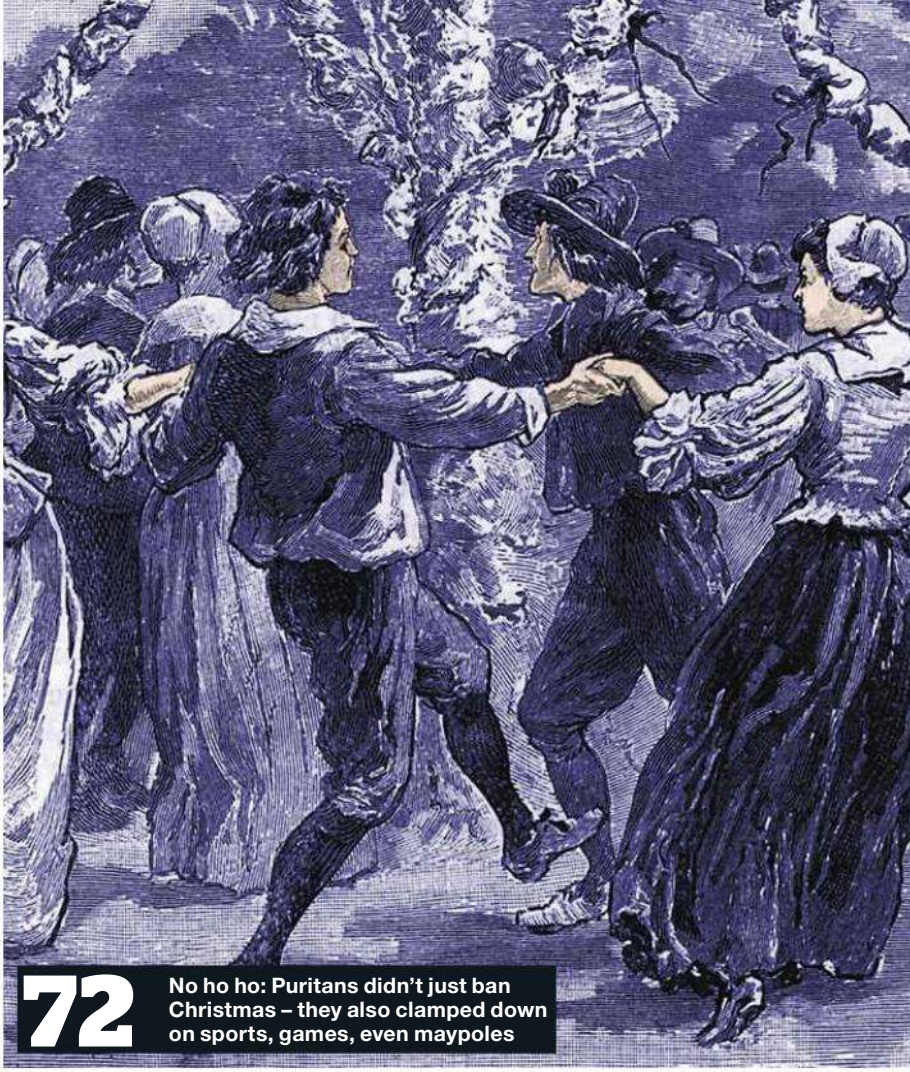
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Charles I resisted political extremism, but paid a heavy price for his policies



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Queen Anne, whose children all died before adulthood, was the last of the Stuart monarchs

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THE STUART YEARS

The rise and fall of the royal house

1603 24 March
James VI of Scotland takes the English throne, becoming James VI and I, and uniting the two countries for the first time – although the union isn't formalised for more than another century. He had already been king of Scotland for 36 years



1604 January
James VI and I commissions **a new English translation of the Bible**. Known as the *King James Bible*, it will be completed in 1611 when it becomes the standard text for the Church of England

1605 5 November
A group of Catholics plot to **assassinate the king by blowing up the House of Lords** at the State Opening of Parliament and restoring Catholicism to the country. One of the lead plotters, Guy Fawkes, is arrested and tortured for two days before confessing all. Eleven people are hanged for the crime. As a result, James VI and I passes laws removing Catholics' right to vote

1646 27 April
With Oxford under siege, **Charles hands himself to the Scots**. Oxford surrenders on 24 June, and in January the Scots hand Charles over to parliament



1649 27 January
Charles I is sentenced to death for high treason. He is beheaded three days later outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall in London. The king requests warm clothing for "the season is so sharp as probably may make me shake, which some observers may imagine proceeds from fear. I would have no such imputation"



1649 11-12 September
Oliver Cromwell leads troops across the Irish sea to subdue "the rebellious Irish". They **storm the town of Drogheda, killing more than 3,000 citizens**

1653 16 December
Cromwell declares himself Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland, investing himself with powers similar to those of a monarch

1658 3 September
After nearly five years as Lord Protector, **Oliver Cromwell dies and is replaced by his son Richard**. Facing significant financial and military issues, Richard is overthrown the following May and Parliament dissolved. Cromwell overthrown. Charles I's son Charles is invited to return from his exile, which he spent mostly in France and the Spanish Netherlands

1660 29 May
Charles returns to London and is crowned king of England, having been regarded as Scotland's king since 1651



1665 February
A plague outbreak claims the lives of an estimated 100,000 Londoners within seven months. This represents 15 per cent of the capital's population



1690 June
William III sails to Ireland to confront James II. He defeats him at the Battle of the Boyne on 1 July, and the contender to the throne flees to France

1694 28 December
Mary Stuart dies from smallpox, leaving William III to rule alone. His popularity with the English people goes into swift decline as a solo monarch

1702 8 March
William III dies two weeks after falling from his horse. Having fathered no children, **the throne is passed to Mary's younger sister, 37-year-old Anne**

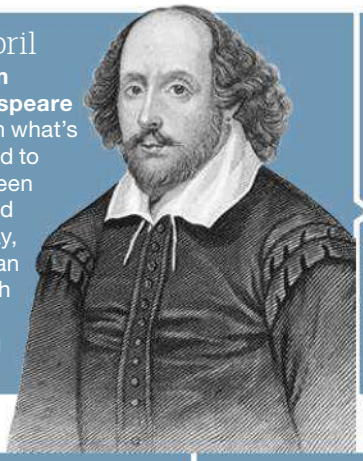
1707 March
The two Acts of Union are finally ratified, uniting England and Scotland as one country – the United Kingdom of Great Britain

1714 1 August
Anne dies at Kensington Palace after a stroke. Despite 17 or 18 pregnancies, she leaves no heir. The throne is passed to George I, Elector of Hanover, **ending more than a century of Stuart rule**

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TIMELINE

1616 23 April
William Shakespeare dies on what's believed to have been his 52nd birthday, less than a month after signing his will



1625 27 March
At the age of 24, **Charles I – the second son of James VI and I and Anne of Denmark – becomes king upon his father's death**. Just over a month later, his marriage to the teenage French princess Henrietta Maria is held in Paris (though Charles himself is absent). His coronation is held at Westminster Abbey the following February

1629 10 March
Outraged when parliament passes three resolutions condemning his financial and religious policies, **Charles I dissolves parliament and imprisons nine parliamentary leaders**. He then embarks on more than a decade of personal rule, a period of English history known as the 'eleven years' tyranny'

1637 23 July
Riots break out in Edinburgh after a new Scottish *Book of Common Prayer*, promoted by Charles, is used in St Giles' Cathedral. The tome, which closely resembles the *English Book of Common Prayer*, is an attempt to ensure greater religious conformity across Charles's three nations. The Scots are outraged at what they see as a move towards the reintroduction of Catholicism

1640 13 April
Needing money in order to send troops into Scotland, **Charles summons a new parliament**. However, MPs refuse to grant him the money and the king opts to dissolve parliament a month later

1642 22 August
Civil war breaks out. The broadly Royalist north and west – the Cavaliers – fight the mainly Parliamentarian south and east – the Roundheads. Charles receives support from Wales and Cornwall; however, with control of London, parliament has the advantage



1644 2 July
Oliver Cromwell leads the Eastern Association forces to victory at the battle of Marston Moor. The following June, parliament's **New Model Army crush the Royalists at the battle of Naseby**

1666 2-5 September
The Great Fire of London rages through the city, destroying St Paul's Cathedral and around 13,000 homes. The fire starts accidentally in the house of the king's baker in Pudding Lane and spreads quickly

1675 June
With Sir Christopher Wren's **designs for reconstructing St Paul's Cathedral approved**, building work commences. It is finally completed in 1710

1677 4 November
Mary Stuart, daughter of James II, **marries her cousin William of Orange** in London

1685 6 February
Charles II dies and, with no legitimate heirs (although he fathered up to a dozen children outside marriage), **his brother James II accedes the throne**

1687 5 July
Isaac Newton's *Principia* is published. Formulating the laws of motion and universal gravitation, it **dominates scientific theory for the next 300 years**



1688 5 November
Protestant conspirators beg William of Orange to rescue them from the Catholic James II. William raises an army in the Netherlands and lands in Torbay. Many defect to support William and **James II flees the country**. The following February, William and Mary are proclaimed king and queen

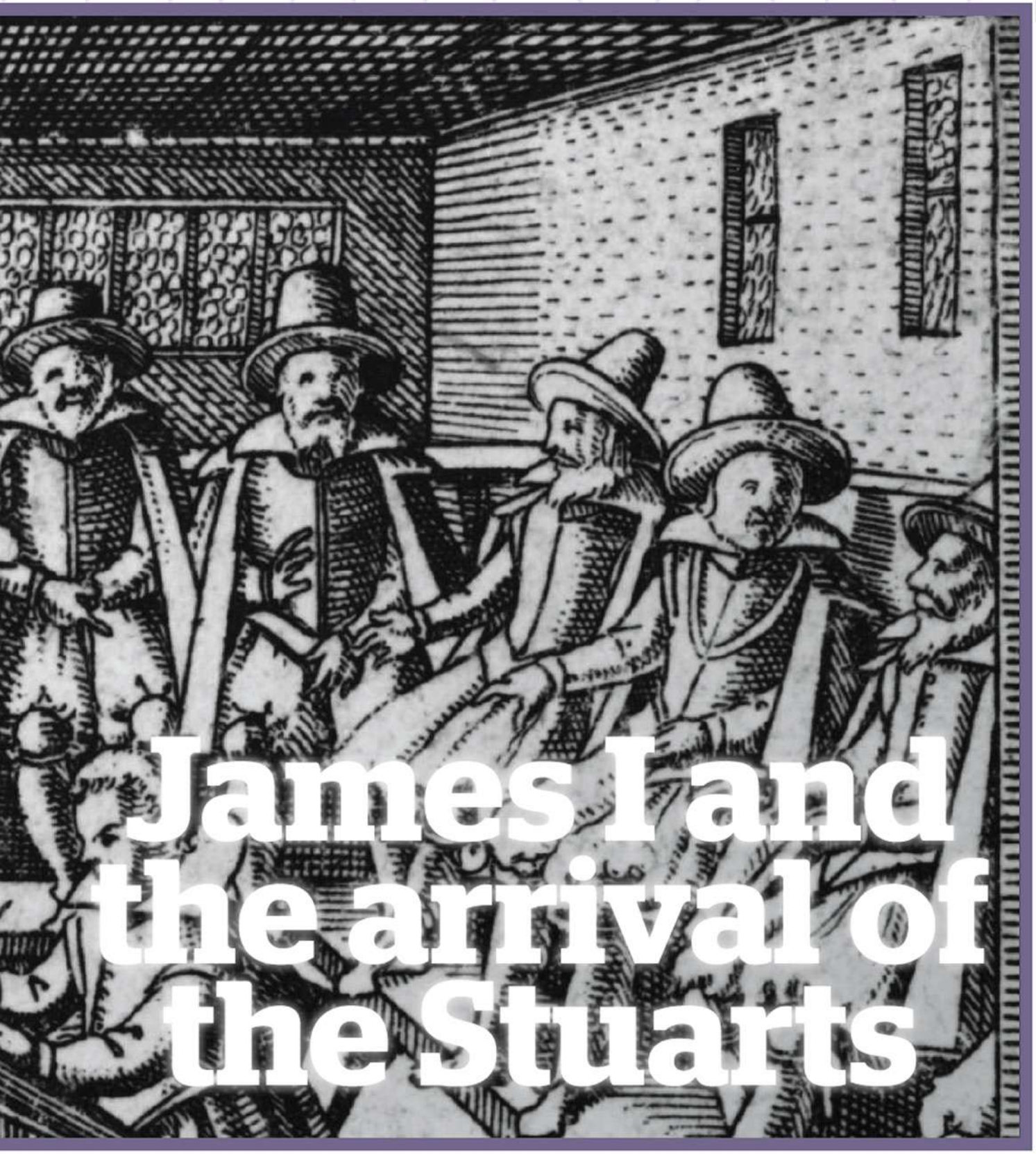


1689 March
Determined to regain control of England, **James II sails to Ireland with 20,000 French troops**. The Catholic Irish are eager to help his bid and James II is soon in control of most of Ireland



James VI of Scotland became James I when crowned king of England in 1603 – first in the line of Stuart monarchs

GETTY IMAGES



James I and the arrival of the Stuarts

A KING OF LOW REGARD

When Elizabeth I died, so too did the House of Tudor. But, as **Tracy Borman** explains, the optimism surrounding the accession of the first Stuart king, James I, didn't last long

Elizabeth I's virginity was both her most celebrated virtue and the death knell of the Tudor dynasty. With no direct heirs to succeed her, Elizabeth had little choice but to leave the crown of England to James Stuart, the son of her old rival, Mary, Queen of Scots. The choice was just as unpalatable for Elizabeth's subjects as it was for the queen herself: England and Scotland were traditional adversaries, and the concept of a single, united kingdom seemed as distant then as it had ever been.

Moreover, although as the great great grandson of Henry VII, James VI of Scotland had the strongest blood claim to the English throne, it was not without complications. Henry VIII, whose relations with Scotland had always been turbulent, had excluded the descendants of his sister Margaret (James VI's great grandmother) from the succession. But the lack of any other viable claimants made it imperative for this legal obstacle to be overcome.

James VI came into his inheritance in the early hours of 24 March 1603, when Elizabeth breathed her last at Richmond Palace. Within just eight hours, he was proclaimed king in London. Fearing civil unrest, the Council closed the ports and imprisoned any notable troublemakers. But the widespread riots that had been anticipated never materialised and, when James made his way south, he was besieged by apparently joyous new subjects. As the playwright Thomas Dekker wryly observed, on Thursday it had been treason to say 'God Save King James', but on Friday it was high treason not to.

James's newfound popularity was due more to the fact that he was a male ruler than that he had the strongest bloodline to the English throne. After almost half a century of female sovereignty – which, despite Elizabeth I's dazzling success, was still considered both unnatural and inferior – the people of England welcomed the accession of a king. Better still, James already had two sons and heirs, Henry and Charles. In short, his gender won out over his Scottishness.

But James soon proved a disappointment. He might have been a long-awaited king, but he hardly cut a very manly figure. His skin was remarkably white and soft, and his beard was described as "sparse". Physically weak and uncoordinated, "his



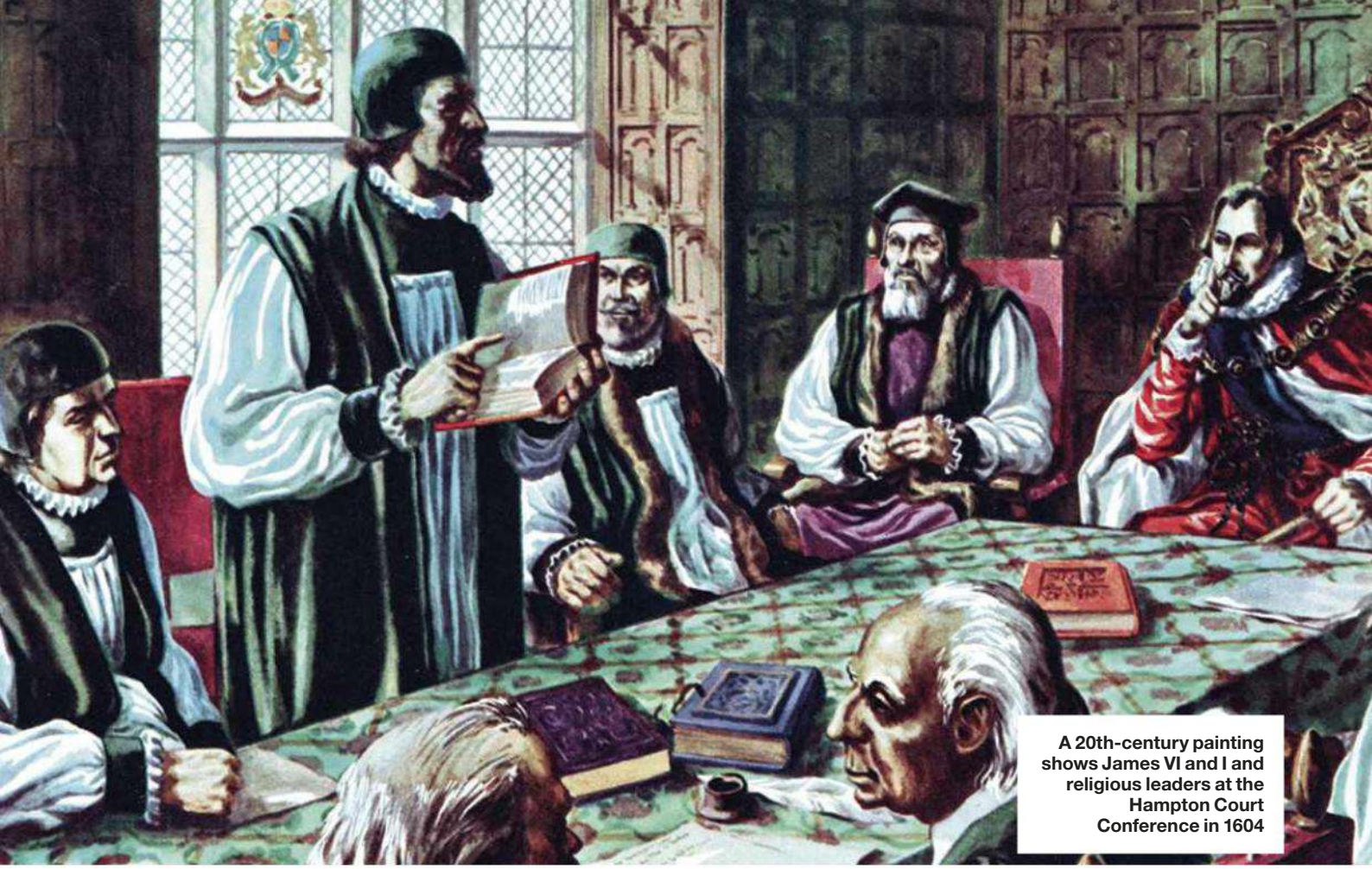
James and his wife, Anne of Denmark (pictured), led very separate lives, leading to much speculation

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND/GETTY IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



"James's newfound popularity was due more to the fact that he was a male ruler than that he had the strongest bloodline to the English throne"

Adam de Colone's oil painting of King James VI and I. Initially the English were excited about having a king. However, his popularity proved to be short-lived



A 20th-century painting shows James VI and I and religious leaders at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604

walke was ever circular" and he had a disconcerting habit of "fidling about his codpiece". Upon his arrival at the court in London, he already had his arm in a sling thanks to falling from his horse. He later complained of having been "very ill" with a heavy cold ever since coming to England. One eyewitness noted with some distaste that the king's tongue seemed too large for his mouth, which made his already broad Scottish accent even harder to understand. It also "made him drinke very uncomely, as if eating his drinke, which came out into the cup of each side his mouth".

Private lives

James's 'unmanly' nature extended to his private life. Although he had fathered seven children by Anne of Denmark, their marriage was one of politics, not passion. They lived separate lives at court and it was noted that they did not "converse" together. The king had long been rumoured to be a closet homosexual; throughout his reign – both in Scotland and in England – he surrounded himself with a succession of beautiful young men. Each of these was rapidly promoted to exalted positions at court and then just as rapidly dropped when a younger, more attractive man came along. That the celebrated Virgin Queen should be succeeded by a 'sexual deviant' was too much for some of the new subjects to bear.

The Jacobean court also presented a stark contrast to the culture and refinement of Elizabeth I's. There are many lurid accounts of the drunkenness and debauchery into which the court entertainments frequently descended. The absence of a strict controlling hand, such as Elizabeth I had provided, led to a general decline in standards across the court. Lady Anne Clifford, whose aunt had been one of the old queen's closest companions, was appalled at "how all the ladies about the Court had gotten such ill names that it was grown a scandalous place".

> "The idea of Britain and a British nation was as contentious an issue in the early 17th century as it is in the 21st"

Before long, the people who had been "very weary of an old woman's government" were harking back to the glory days of Elizabeth I. They began to grumble that, in sharp contrast to the late queen, James lacked "great majesty" and "solemnities". Although "crafty and cunning in petty things", he was naive in "weighty affairs", which led one contemporary to coin the famous description of him as "the wisest fool in Christendome".

Neither did James possess the natural charm and charisma of the late queen. In stark contrast to Elizabeth, who had made public relations an art form with her frequent progresses and public ceremonials, James spurned the eager attentions of his new subjects. When out hunting early in his reign, he was "driven out of the field with press of company, which came to see him" and, shortly afterwards, ordered a proclamation to be issued "that none shall presume to come to him on hunting days".

Nevertheless, from the very beginning of his reign, James VI and I promoted the idea of Britain and a united British nation, rather than two loosely allied countries with only a king in common. In so doing, he invoked hostility on both sides of the border. It was an issue as contentious in the early 17th century as it is in the 21st. Undaunted, James had a family tree drawn up to demonstrate that his English blood stretched as far back as King Alfred and the Saxon kings. In short, he was at least as English as he was Scottish.

The new king wasted no time in summoning the English parliament to pass legislation for the formal political union of the two kingdoms. On 19 March 1604, he gave a speech in which he insisted that Britain was an entity which had been artificially divided but which could – and

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



ABOVE: **King James interrogates Guy Fawkes on his role in the gunpowder plot to blow up parliament** RIGHT: **A group of 'witches' are beaten in front of the king c1610**

should – be reunited. Drawing on one of Elizabeth's favourite sayings, that she was "married to England", he styled himself the 'Husband of Britain', who could not therefore have two wives (Scotland and England).

Suspicious minds

Despite what was, by James's standards, a rousing speech, parliament remained unconvinced. This was at least partly due to the natural xenophobia of the English. "They have a great antipathy to foreigners," observed an Italian visitor to London about a century earlier, "and imagine that they never come into their island, but to make themselves master of it, and to usurp their goods." That is exactly what parliament feared James would do and, despite a voluminous suite of State Papers devoted to the issue, it all came to nothing.

Meanwhile, the king attempted to impose his religious views upon his new subjects. A fierce advocate of the Protestant faith, James could not abide what he scathingly referred to as the "rotten religion" of the papists. In 1604, he held a conference at Hampton Court with the aim of unifying the English Church. Although, in theory, Puritans and Catholics alike were obliged to conform to the 'Anglican' Church, in practice this church was more Protestant than Catholic.

When it became clear that the new king had no intention of following Elizabeth I's policy of toleration towards Catholics, dangerous dissent began to form among his subjects. In 1605, a group of Catholic gentlemen led by Robert Catesby hatched a plot to blow up the House of Lords during the state opening of parliament on 5 November 1605. This was to be the prelude to a popular revolt in the Midlands, during which James's nine-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, would be installed as the Catholic head of state. It was only thanks to an anonymous letter to the authorities, received in late October, that the king and his Protestant regime were not wiped out. The House of Lords was searched at around midnight on 4 November, just hours before the plot was due to be executed, and Guy Fawkes was discovered with 36 barrels of gunpowder – more than enough to reduce the entire building to rubble.

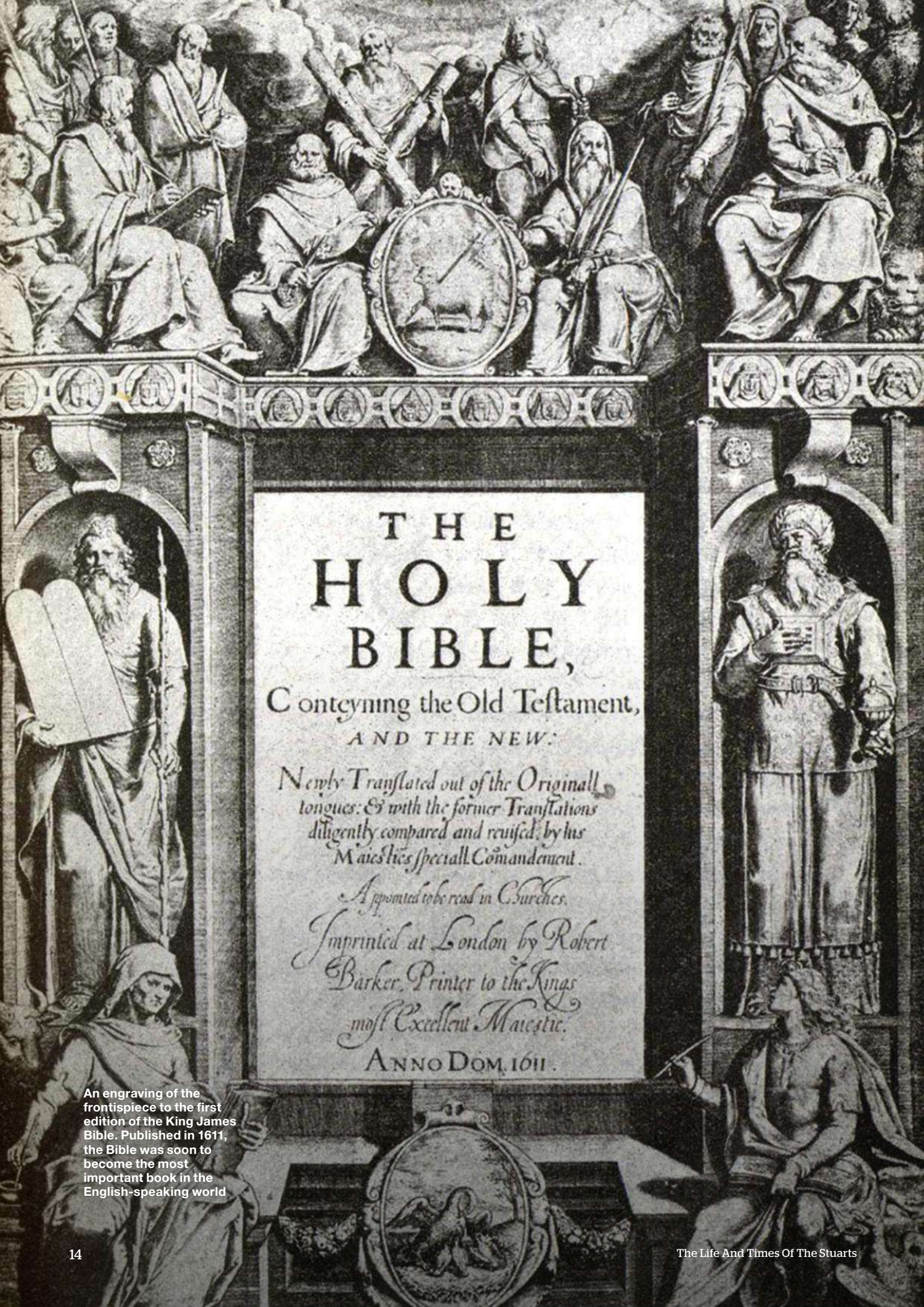
Refusing to heed the warning, James continued to doggedly pursue policies and reforms in which he fiercely believed. They included the notorious Witchcraft Act of 1604. This was altogether more severe than any of the Tudor legislation against sorcery and the 'dark arts'. It made hanging mandatory for a first offence of witchcraft, even if the accused had not committed murder, and prompted decades of witch-hunting, resulting in many hundreds of innocent people (mostly women) being executed.

Elizabeth I had maintained a keen awareness of – and respect for – her subjects' wishes throughout her long reign. By contrast, James displayed a consistent disregard for them – one that would become increasingly apparent as his reign progressed. Having failed to unite his two kingdoms or the church, he became ever more disillusioned with – and intolerant of – his English subjects. "The king ... seems dissatisfied with his people, stays as little as possible in London, never shows himself in the city, and in entering and leaving always takes the least frequented routes," observed the Venetian ambassador on a visit to court in 1618. "In short, in all his actions he does not conceal his dislike."

By the time of his death in 1625, James had not only lost the love of many of his subjects in England but had also sown the seeds of discontent that would soon find full, terrifying expression. The fledgling Stuart dynasty was already on the verge of destruction. H

Tracy Borman is an author and historian. Her latest book is *Thomas Cromwell* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2014)

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An engraving of the frontispiece to the first edition of the King James Bible. Published in 1611, the Bible was soon to become the most important book in the English-speaking world

THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

More than 400 years after it was first published, **Pauline Croft** explains how the "most important book in the English language" came into being

From the opening salvo of Genesis ("In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth") to the closing words of Revelation ("The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen"), one book has had a greater impact on the English-speaking world than any other. That book contains such well-used phrases as "Let there be light", "Am I my brother's keeper?" and "A multitude of sins".

The book in question is the Bible – or more particularly, the King James or Authorised Version of the Bible. This is an important distinction for, though many of the above phrases had been used in earlier translations, it was the King James Version that was to become required reading throughout the American colonies and the rest of the British empire.

The King James Bible was the product of 17th-century scholarship in Hebrew, Greek and Latin – scholarship that made it possible to produce an English version that's proved to have enduring influence.

Yet, while the Bible's reach and impact are unparalleled, its beginnings were fraught. It was published in the early years of the reign of the King James VI and I after whom it was named at a time when the realm was being subjected to the tremors of the Reformation. In 1604, James arranged a conference at Hampton Court to try to settle the simmering differences between the Church of England authorities and Puritans. One of the Puritan requests put to James was for a new translation of the Bible, to which he willingly conceded.

Political concessions

The King James Bible was published, in English, in 1611. As a highly educated man, James found the translation project worthwhile in itself, yet the Bible also served him politically – as a tactical concession to those who were unhappy with the state of the Church of England.

However, political considerations only tell part of the story – for the real driving force behind the publication of an English Bible was the emergence of a new technology: printing.

The year 1456 witnessed the emergence of a printed version of the Latin Vulgate Bible – the fourth-century translation by St Jerome – which was followed by a wave of learned editions of classical texts. These inspired the brilliant young scholar William Tyndale to try to print the New Testament in English. But the reigning king in England, Henry VIII, was still very much against the Protestant movement at this time, so Tyndale fell under suspicion of heresy and fled to Germany in the 1520s.

Tyndale probably met the Protestant reformer Martin Luther at Wittenberg only two years after Luther's German New Testament appeared in 1522, and his own English New Testament was printed at



King James VI and I – seen here in a portrait by Paul van Somer – regarded the Bible as a useful tactical concession to critics of the Church of England

GETTY IMAGES X2

Worms in 1526. Tyndale left some Old Testament translations in manuscript and – though he was burned as a heretic in the Low Countries in 1536 – much of his translation of the New Testament passed almost unchanged into the 1611 version.

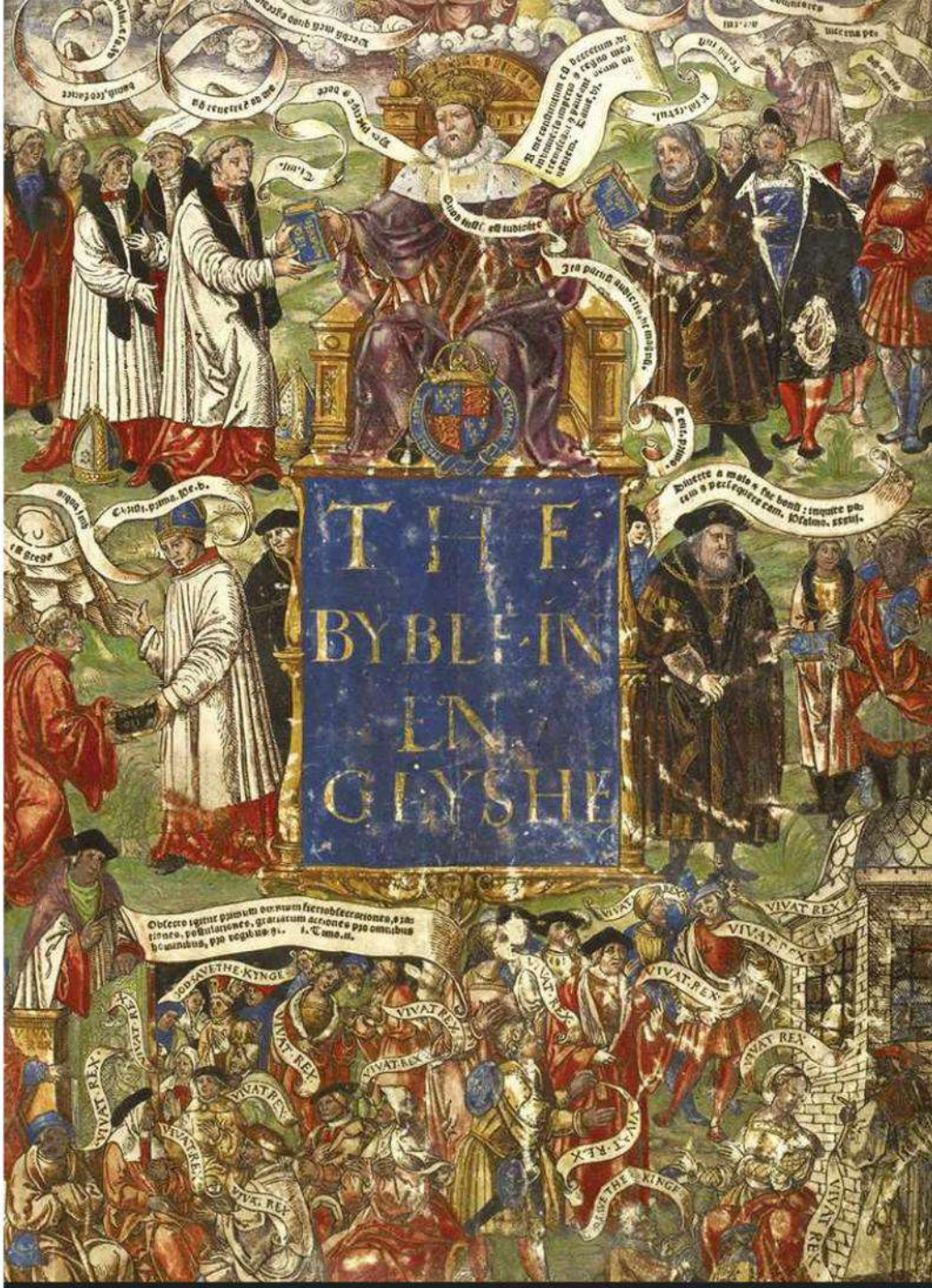
By the time of Tyndale's death, the idea of an English Bible was becoming mainstream. In 1535, Miles Coverdale, a Cambridge monk, published a complete Bible tactfully dedicated to Henry VIII. Coverdale knew German, so he could put Luther's translations into English; the rest he translated from the Latin Vulgate. Coverdale did not know enough Hebrew to tackle the Old Testament afresh, but his translation of the German Psalms became an English liturgical classic.

In 1537, with Henry VIII's opposition to Bible translations softening, a revised version using the texts of both Tyndale and Coverdale emerged. This was Matthew's Bible and the first to carry royal authorisation. 'Matthew' was almost certainly the radical Protestant John Rogers, who promoted his version but who paid a high price for his work, since he was burned under Mary Tudor.

Then, in 1539, came the Great Bible, printed in Paris under the patronage of Henry's leading minister Thomas Cromwell, in response to the royal injunctions of 1538. These ordered a lectern-size Bible to be set up in all churches – so 'great' referred merely to its size. The title-page is superb, almost certainly from a woodcut by Hans Holbein, showing God blessing Henry VIII and handing down copies of the Bible to Archbishop Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell. Here is the royal supremacy in action: there is no sign of the pope.

All these 1530s editions rely heavily on the work of Tyndale and Coverdale. However, in 1539 the Oxford scholar Richard Taverner produced a revision of Matthew's Bible with improved versions from the original New Testament Greek. Taverner knew no Hebrew, so he based his translation of the Old Testament on the Latin Vulgate.

Here we see a pattern being established: where translators did not have all the linguistic skills necessary, they improvised, using what was already available. Printing had vastly increased the number of inexpensive copies that could be sold, so scholars and publishers alike saw a commercial opportunity, not just a religious one. However, commissioning a translation of the whole text of the Bible with a uniform prose style would need considerable resources. Meanwhile, the best that publishers could offer was an amalgam of different pieces of translation.



The title page of *The Byble in Englyshe,* known as the Great Bible, shows Henry VIII handing down copies of the book to Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop Cranmer

Royal intervention

Such developments were brought to a juddering halt on the execution of Thomas Cromwell in 1540. The conservative faction at court were returned to power, along with the Latin Vulgate. In 1546, the use of Tyndale and Coverdale's New Testament translations was forbidden by royal proclamation. Following a brief respite during the reign of the fiercely Protestant Edward VI, English Bibles were suppressed once again under the Catholic Queen Mary. Yet by now, printing had made it virtually impossible for any government to control the translations that people had already bought for home use.

In 1557, while in exile at Geneva, the Oxford classicist and Calvinist William Whittingham published a revised New Testament for English Protestants there. For the first time, the text was divided into numbered verses for easy reference and printed in Roman type. When everybody else rushed back to England on Mary's death in 1558, Whittingham stayed behind to supervise a complete translation and, in 1560, he produced the Geneva Bible, dedicated to Mary's successor, Elizabeth I. In this, it is possible to see the influence of Calvin and other reformers, as well as that of French translators like LeFèvre d'Étaples. The Geneva Bible was popularly known as the Breeches Bible, from its rendering of Genesis where Adam and Eve, realising they were naked, made themselves 'breeches'. It remained influential under Elizabeth and many passages were re-used

"The final version of the Bible was **homogeneous** – from Genesis to Revelation. God's word was now speaking with **one divine voice**"

THE REFORMATION

The reformation was the Protestant reaction against Catholicism. It was initiated in Germany by the priest Martin Luther, who taught that the Bible, rather than the pope, was the sole source of divine authority. The Reformation in England began during the reign of Henry VIII. Henry was theologically conservative, and initially opposed to Protestantism, but the pope's refusal to grant the king a divorce led him to split from Rome in the 1530s.

In the short reign of Henry's son, Edward VI, a much more determined attempt was made to make England more fully Protestant. This was brought to a sharp halt when Edward died and was replaced by his half-sister Mary, who re-established Catholicism in England. Yet a final twist on Mary's death saw her half-sister, Elizabeth, ascend to the throne. Elizabeth restored Protestantism, but in her religious settlement of 1559 some ceremonial and organisational elements were retained. This led to the rise of a group known as Puritans, who wanted rid of anything that inhibited a personal and direct relationship with God.



A 1546 woodcut of Protestant reformer Martin Luther

in the Authorised Version.

At the same time, following Elizabeth's accession, the Great Bible of Cromwell and Cranmer returned to popularity. In 1568, Archbishop Matthew Parker and his colleagues completed a revision known as the Bishops' Bible; in 1571, all churchwardens were ordered to obtain a copy for their churches. The Bishops' Bible followed the Geneva Bible in dividing the text into verses for easy reference, a practical device now popular with both readers and preachers. Any phrases containing "lightness or obscenity" were discreetly tidied up and, to avoid contention, no marginal notes were allowed. The translators worked book by book, without much co-ordination, so the translation varied in quality.

But what of Elizabethan England's Catholic minority? Soon they were able to read their own version of the New Testament – courtesy of a translation provided by the English Catholic college at Reims (which later moved to Douai) in 1582. An English Old Testament followed in 1609. Much of the English in the two books is truly Elizabethan – direct and vivid – and the translators of the Authorised Version undoubtedly read the New Testament produced in Reims.

It was the proliferations of versions of the Bible in circulation by the end of Elizabeth's reign – together with increasing scholarly knowledge of Hebrew and Greek – that led to the Puritan request at in 1604 for a new translation. The leading Puritan speaker Dr John Reynolds asked for "one only translation of ye bible, to be authenticall and read in ye church". Another version has the rather more courtly: "May your majesty be pleased that the Bible be new translated".

Richard Bancroft, the authoritarian bishop of London, was opposed, but James was open to the idea, not least because he had strong objections to the Geneva Bible, offensive in its explicit condemnation of royal rule and its frequent use of the word 'tyrant'. Significantly, the word is not found at all in the Authorised Version.

The king's views were made clear. "His Highness wishes, that some especial pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation… and this to be done by the best learned of both the universities; after them to be reviewed by the bishops and chief learned of the church: from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly to be ratified by his Royal authority, to be read in the whole church, and no other."

The bishops were required to find livings for the translators of more than £20 per year – a decent income. The translating committee was to be divided into six companies of eight members, with six directors supervising them, although we only know the names of 50 men. Bancroft insisted that the base text must be the Bishops' Bible and should be as little altered as was compatible with the original texts. His instructions were discreetly ignored: modern studies have shown that perhaps as little as a quarter of the Authorised Version can be traced to the Bishops' Bible.

The scale of the project was remarkable: the translators divided into six groups, two each working in Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster. Each cleric was to produce an individual translation, which was then discussed by the group. An agreed text was circulated to the other five groups, until a final version emerged. If the translators disagreed about any passage, or found something obscure, they could ask for assistance.

By spring 1610, it only remained to pull together the work of the teams into one reasonably coherent whole. The translators met at Stationers' Hall in central London with the aim of fulfilling this very task and, by early 1611, a final text was ready for the printer. Bishop Miles Smith of Gloucester wrote that text's long and beautiful preface: "Translation it is, that openeth the window, to let in the light". He hoped the translation would bring readers "the light of understanding, stableness of persuasion, repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy". The result was a masterpiece of English prose. Moreover, as the work of a team that collated their drafts before arriving at the final version, it was homogeneus – from Genesis through to Revelation. God's word was now speaking with one divine voice and, since the king had initiated the project, carried an aura of royal authority.

Despite having the monarch's official blessing, it wasn't until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 that the King James Version became universally familiar, both in Britain and the American colonies.

Yet, once the King James Version finally became the only Bible used in British churches, it remained so until the Revised Standard Version of 1881–85. To this day, it is the best-known translation. Its long history at the centre of Christianity makes it the most important book in the English language. H

Pauline Croft is professor of early modern history at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her books include *King James (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)*

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FRANCIS BACON THE TRUE RENAISSANCE MAN

Bacon was a prominent and influential figure in both Tudor and Stuart times. **Richard Serjeantson** reveals the many disciplines in which this 16th-century polymath excelled

Francis Bacon was born in 1561, two years after the accession of Queen Elizabeth I, and was the youngest of two sons of an important political family. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, where his tutor was a future Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift. He pursued an increasingly successful career as a lawyer and MP until, in 1618, he became lord chancellor and was raised to the peerage as Baron Verulam (after the Latin name for his home town of St Albans). Three years later, however, he was impeached and deposed in a political attack orchestrated by enemies in Parliament and aimed at his patron, the royal favourite, the Duke of Buckingham.

Bacon died in 1626 without regaining the political favour he badly wanted. But he combined his great political energies with intellectual interests in literature and philosophy of a remarkable range and scope, writing once to his uncle, Elizabeth's lord treasurer and principal minister Lord Burghley, that he had taken "all Knowledge to be my Province". Yet Bacon has long been regarded in a rather ambiguous light. Some recent scholars have stressed the contemporary rumours about his sexuality. His integrity and loyalty was questioned both by his peers and later historians. He stands accused of betraying his former patron, the Earl of Essex, whom he helped prosecute after the Earl's failed coup d'état against the ageing Elizabeth in 1601. And he did admit taking bribes as lord chancellor – although he claimed they did not affect his judgement.

Richard Serjeantson is a fellow and lecturer in history at Trinity College, Cambridge, with ongoing research interests in Francis Bacon

THE PHILOSOPHER AND SCIENTIST

Bacon's intellectual curiosity saw him trying to usurp Aristotle's dominant ideas

The most important of Bacon's intellectual interests was his fascination with natural science. His physician William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, said rather cuttingly that Bacon wrote philosophy "like a lord chancellor". And in some ways Bacon wasn't on the cutting edge of early 17th-century science: he doubted the claim of Nicholas Copernicus, for instance, that the earth went round the sun.

But his great significance stems from his conviction of the possibilities of scientific progress. He called his scheme for the renewal of human knowledge the 'Great Instauration'. At the heart of this was his *New Organon* of 1620, which intended to replace the ideas of Aristotle. Bacon's solution was to rest the study of nature on a bedrock of natural historical experiments: his own collection of these, 1626's *Sylva Sylvarum*, was his most popular book in the century after his death.

THE LAWYER

Bacon had great ambitions to improve English common law

The law was a constant throughout Bacon's life. He turned to it as a source of financial support after the unexpected death of his father when he was 18 and he remained a loyal member of Gray's Inn (one of London's Inns of Court) all his life. A set of legal maxims was among the first books he published.

Bacon was a sharp and exacting lawyer – something Sir Walter Ralegh learned to his cost when Bacon delivered the death sentence at his trial in 1618. Yet he never became a judge (at least until he became lord chancellor) and he seems to have been rather dissatisfied with English common law, advancing a number of schemes to improve it throughout his life. This came to nothing, but certain aspects of Bacon's jurisprudence have had a significant impact in later centuries, in particular his arguments in Calvin's Case (1608) that Scots born after the accession of King James VI and I to the English crown were automatically naturalised in England.

THE WRITER

Bacon's written words drew heavily from both his reading and his wide life experience

Bacon left quite an impression on English literature. He made his greatest impact with his *Essays*, the first book with that title in English. Bacon's essays often distill the fruits of his reading and experience – whether in politics, philosophy or, in one notable case, gardening – into concise, suggestive and quotable prose. Developing a myth from Plato and a literary device from Thomas More's earlier *Utopia*, Bacon also wrote a scientific utopia, the *New Atlantis* (1626), in which he set forth his vision of the discoveries and inventions that his 'Great Instauration' (see opposite) might bring about.

But his most ambitious book is the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), a great encyclopedia, not of what was known, but of what was not sufficiently well known – and of its possibilities for improvement. It's addressed to James I, but Bacon was unlucky in his timing: the book appeared in the febrile atmosphere following the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, so didn't quite make the immediate impression he had hoped for.



Bacon the polymath published volumes of both philosophy and history



"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds," the prolific Bacon once noted

THE POLITICIAN

Bacon was prominent in political circles, even if his ambitions were never quite realised

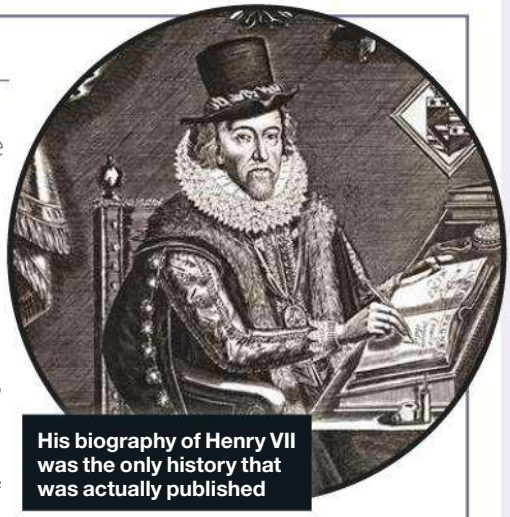
Bacon pursued a lifelong political career. He first sat in Parliament in 1581 and remained an MP until he was elevated to the Lords in 1618. He spoke often in the Commons and had a particularly important role drafting legislation for the prospective Union of England and Scotland after James's accession in 1603. In 1607, Bacon was appointed solicitor-general, and in 1613 he was made attorney-general. Finally, in 1618, he became lord chancellor, succeeding his former patron Lord Ellesmere.

Bacon acted as an informal advisor to a number of powerful nobles, but his political ambitions always centred on his monarchs – Elizabeth I and James I, for whom he drafted various public declarations. He never advanced as far as he hoped during the reign of Elizabeth, with whom he had a difficult relationship, but James's accession did ultimately – if briefly – lead to the high political office he always sought.

THE HISTORIAN

Overshadowed by his other achievements, he was one of the first historians of the Tudor age

Bacon's work as an historian is probably now the least well-known aspect of his life, but it was something that he took extremely seriously. Renaissance authors constantly had before them the model of the great historians of the ancient world, above all Livy and Tacitus, and the urge to imitate and extend their work into the modern world was strong. Bacon planned several histories in the course of his life, including an account of the Tudor dynasty and a "just and Complete History" of the two recently-joined nations of England and Scotland. But the one he eventually wrote was a *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* – the founder of the Tudor line and the great-great-grandfather of James I.



His biography of Henry VII was the only history that was actually published

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THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

In 1605, a small group of disaffected Catholics came within a whisker of blowing the king and parliament to smithereens. **Rob Attar** uncovers nine places associated with this bloody scheme

On the evening of 26 October 1605, Lord Monteagle received a startling letter. An anonymous correspondent advised the English nobleman against attending the upcoming session of parliament, due to begin a few days later. The letter warned: "They shall receive a terrible blow this parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them". It was a chilling message. Monteagle raced from his home in Hoxton to Whitehall where he passed the letter to Robert Cecil, the secretary of state and second most powerful man in the land. Cecil's investigations led to a cellar under the Palace of Westminster and the discovery of the most audacious terrorist attack ever attempted on British soil.

It was a plot that had its origins back in the reign of Elizabeth I. Henry VIII and Edward VI laid the foundations of the English Reformation, but Elizabeth took it a stage further, ensuring the country was firmly Protestant. As the 16th century drew to a close, the country's remaining Catholics faced increasing levels of persecution. Fierce regulations included the death penalty for those found to be sheltering priests. It was a grim time to be a Catholic in England.

Hopes rested on the mortality of Elizabeth and the likely choice for the Virgin Queen's successor, James VI of Scotland. Though himself a Protestant, James was the son of Catholic martyr Mary Queen of Scots and his own wife was also a Catholic. Furthermore, prior to his succession to the English throne, he had hinted that his reign would bring greater toleration for the country's Catholic minority.

When he became king in 1603, James did indeed limit the restrictions on Catholicism in England. However, within a year he had reversed this policy after opposition from English Protestants. Furious at being let down, a small group of young Catholics began plotting a violent act of revenge. The head of this band was Robert Catesby, a rebellious member of the minor gentry.

In May 1604, this group gathered in London and started to hatch out its plan. The idea they settled upon was to ignite a huge cache of gunpowder underneath Westminster on the opening session of parliament. The resulting explosion would wipe out almost the entire English

ALAMY



Remember, remember the Fifth of November: the stage was set for an explosive start to parliament in 1605

establishment: the royal family, the MPs, the lords and the leading bishops. Guy Fawkes, a Catholic volunteer who had been fighting in the Low Countries, was the man selected to prepare the gunpowder and light the fuse.

The plotters rented a cellar below the Palace of Westminster and filled it with gunpowder, ready for the state opening of parliament on 5 November 1605. All seemed to be going to plan but, with just over a week to go, Lord Monteagle received his tip-off. Armed with this information, Robert Cecil liaised with King James who suggested that the cellars under Westminster be searched. On the night of 4–5 November, Fawkes was apprehended caught red-handed alongside 36 barrels of gunpowder.

Despite Fawkes's arrest, Catesby opted to incite an armed insurrection in the Midlands, but found few willing to support his cause. The rebel leader was gunned down alongside a few of his remaining supporters on 8 November. Those who weren't killed were despatched to the Tower of London where they, alongside Fawkes, were brutally executed in January 1606.

The Gunpowder Plot had failed utterly, to the delight of the Protestant English. On 5 November, bonfires were lit in celebration, a practice that continues to this day. For the Catholic minority, the attempt at mass murder had disastrous consequences. "The long-term contribution of the gunpowder plot was to provide another reason for Protestants to dislike and be scared of Catholics," explains James Sharpe, author of *Remember, Remember the Fifth of November* (Profile, 2005). "Protestant propaganda had for a long time been saying 'the Catholics are out to get us' and the Gunpowder Plot just demonstrated that."

King James responded to the attempt on his life relatively calmly, without the bloody reprisals that might have been expected. Nevertheless, the Gunpowder Plot did lead to a worsening of Catholic/Protestant relations, which were not normalised until the 19th century. The celebrations of 5 November became not just a commemoration of lives preserved, but also an opportunity to vent anti-Catholic feelings. As much as anything else, it was England's deliverance from Catholics that the revellers chose to remember.

Historical advisor: Professor James Sharpe, University of York

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT: 9 PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Baddesley Clinton Warwickshire

● *www.nationaltrust.org.uk/baddesley-clinton*

England's Catholics were under a great deal of pressure towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign. Measures, including fines for non-attendance at Protestant services, made life very difficult indeed.

Catholic priests who had trained on the continent were smuggled into England where they could facilitate worship. They were sheltered in Catholic safehouses, which were often equipped with priest's holes that could be used as hiding places when inspectors arrived.

Built in the 15th century, Baddesley Clinton became an important place of refuge for Catholics. Though it belonged to the Ferrers family, it was rented by the Vaux sisters who were committed to shielding priests. Members of the Jesuit order (a controversial Catholic missionary group) are believed to have met at here in 1592 and escaped detection by hiding in a tunnel when government officers turned up. The English Jesuit leader Henry Garnett was among their number.



Baddesley Clinton was a favourite bolthole for Catholic priests



2 Banqueting House London

● *www.hrp.org.uk/BanquetingHouse*

Disillusioned by Elizabeth I, England's Catholics expected better things under her successor, James VI of Scotland. Born in 1566, James had acceded to the Scottish throne at barely a year old and managed to hang on to his crown, despite several intrigues against him.

As Henry VII's great-great grandson, James was the leading contender to replace Elizabeth I when the queen died childless in 1603.

James VI did indeed become James I of England and, on the surface, this was a promising development for Catholics. James was the son of a Catholic martyr (Mary Queen of Scots),

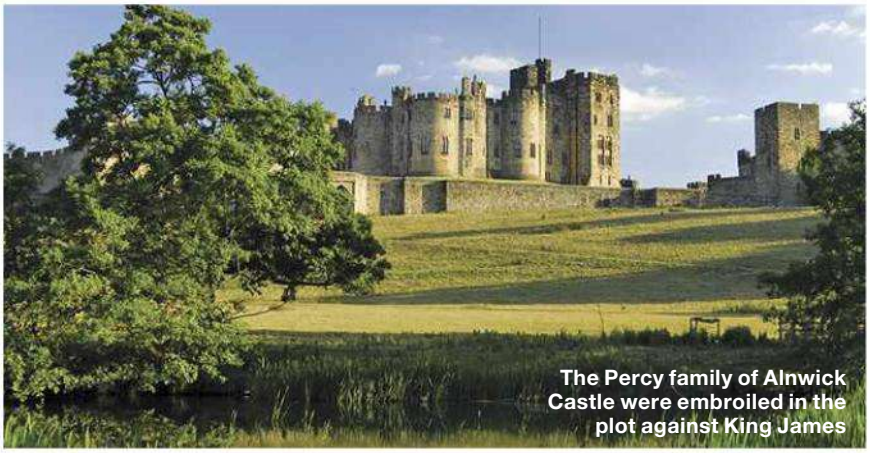
3 Alnwick Castle Northumberland

● *www.alnwickcastle.com*

James I's reign had begun well for Catholics. One of his earliest acts had been to halt the collection of fines from those who refused to attend the established church. That, though, was as far as the new king was prepared to go. James had no intention of granting Catholics religious freedom and when prompted by Protestant critics, he relented and restored the financial penalties. Once again, Catholic liberation seemed a very distant dream. To compound matters, James began negotiating a peace deal with Catholic Spain, putting pay to the possibility of a military overthrow of Protestant rule.

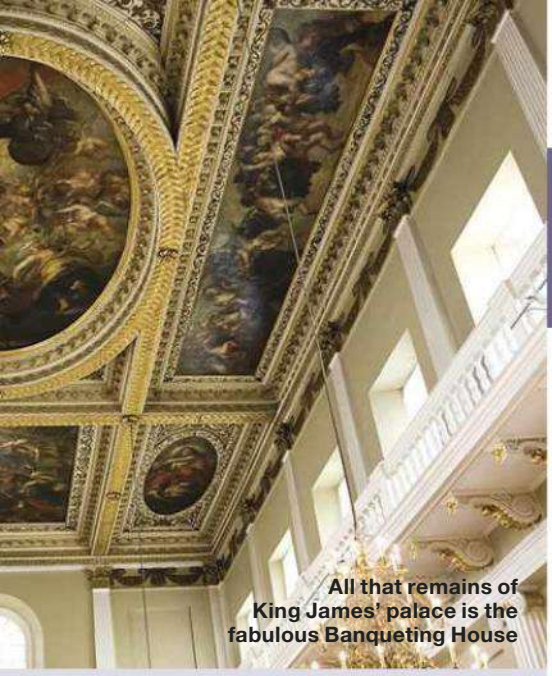
Their hopes dashed, some of England's most committed Catholics turned their thoughts to violence. In May 1604, the Warwickshire gentleman Robert Catesby met with four friends in London where they began to develop a murderous scheme to be rid of King James and his ministers. One of Catesby's co-conspirators was Thomas Percy, a relative of the ninth Earl of Northumberland, who was then in the earl's employ as constable of Alnwick Castle. Percy had good reason to be angry with King James. It was he who had met with James prior to Elizabeth's death and received assurances of better treatment for Catholics. Already a wild character who had once been jailed for killing a man, Percy was keen to mete out the ultimate punishment to the king.

The Gunpowder Plot took Thomas away from Northumberland, but the Percy family remained at the castle and still does so today. It was built in stages from the 14th century and is undoubtedly one of the finest fortresses in the land.



The Percy family of Alnwick Castle were embroiled in the plot against King James

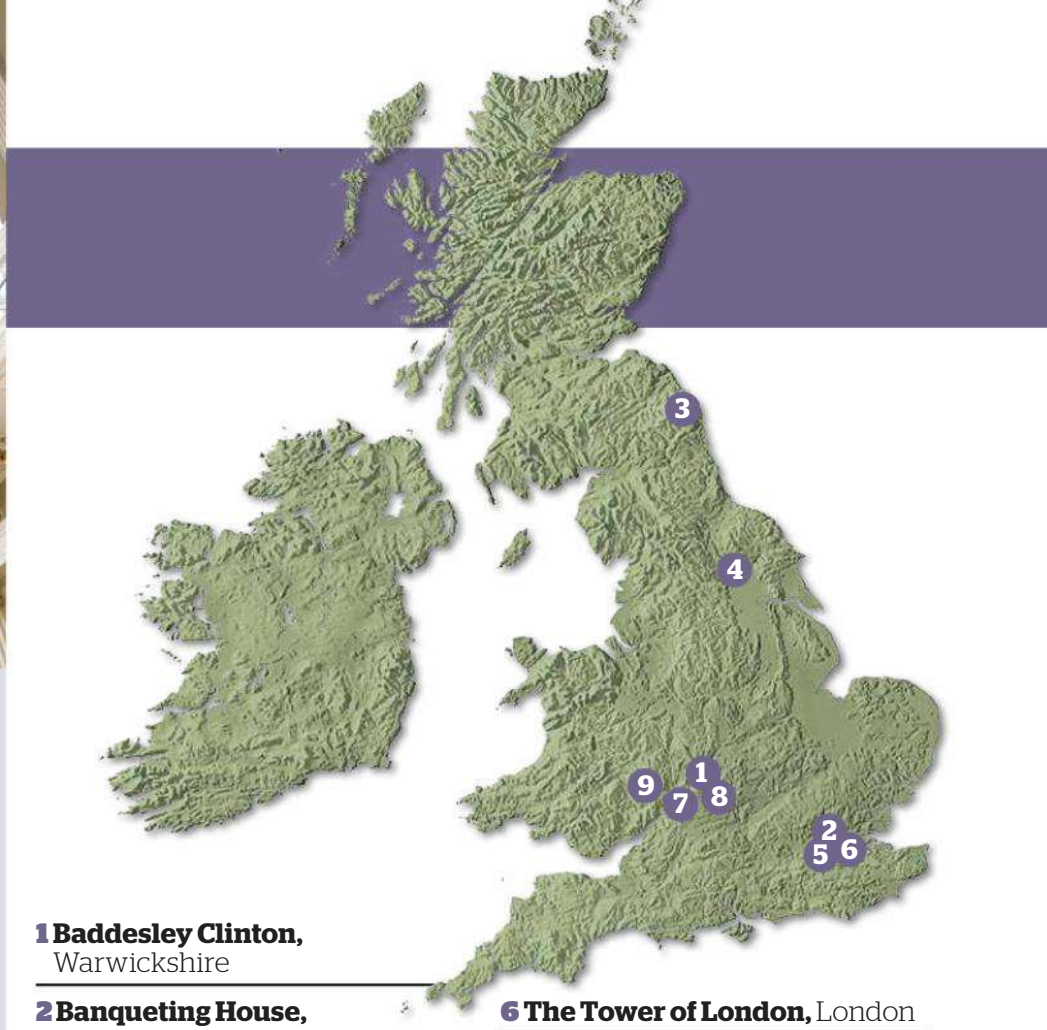
ALAMY, DREAMSTIME



All that remains of King James' palace is the fabulous Banqueting House

while his wife (Anne of Denmark) was also Catholic. During his time in Scotland, James had been relatively accepting of Catholics and made noises to the effect that this lenience would follow him south. "Great hope [there] is of toleration," wrote Henry Garnett when James took the throne.

After arriving in London, James was installed in the Palace of Whitehall, then the principal residence of English monarchs. Later in his reign, James had Inigo Jones design him a new palace, but this burnt down in 1698, leaving only the magnificent Banqueting House. Today in the care of Historic Royal Palaces, the building testifies to Jones's architectural genius and also contains a marvellous ceiling by the artist Peter Paul Rubens.



1 Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire

2 Banqueting House, London

3 Alnwick Castle, Northumberland

4 Guy Fawkes Inn, York

5 The Palace of Westminster, London

6 The Tower of London, London

7 Coughton Court, Warwickshire

8 Warwick Castle, Warwickshire

9 Hagley Hall, Worcestershire

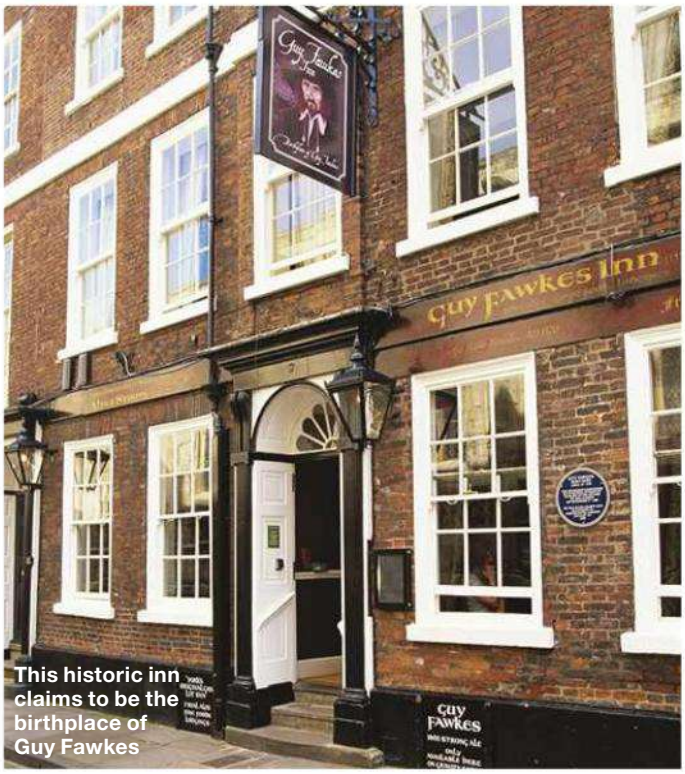
4 Guy Fawkes Inn York

● *www.gfyork.com*

This charming old inn is the reputed birthplace of a man who is still burned on bonfires more than 400 years after his death. Guy Fawkes arrived in the world in 1570 and was baptised at St Michael le Belfrey church in York. He was born a Protestant, but his mother's second marriage was to a Catholic and it is likely that this event prompted her son's conversion as well.

The young Fawkes became a soldier. Like many other Catholics seeking military experience, he went to fight in the Low Countries for Spain against Dutch Protestants. There he gained valuable experience in munitions and it was partly because of these skills that he was recruited by the plotters. Having been out of the country for several years, Fawkes was also relatively unknown in London, meaning he could move freely in the city without arousing too much suspicion.

Thomas Percy rented a small property close to the Houses of Parliament in May 1604. Here Fawkes was installed under the assumed name of John Johnson to oversee the project. The plotters' initial idea was to dig a mine from their property's cellar underneath the Palace of Westminster. This, however, proved to be laborious work, so the conspirators were delighted when they discovered that a vault right underneath the Lords Chamber was available to rent. Percy managed to lease the vault and it was here that the gunpowder would be stored in advance of the opening of parliament.



This historic inn claims to be the birthplace of Guy Fawkes

ALAMY

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT: 9 PLACES TO EXPLORE

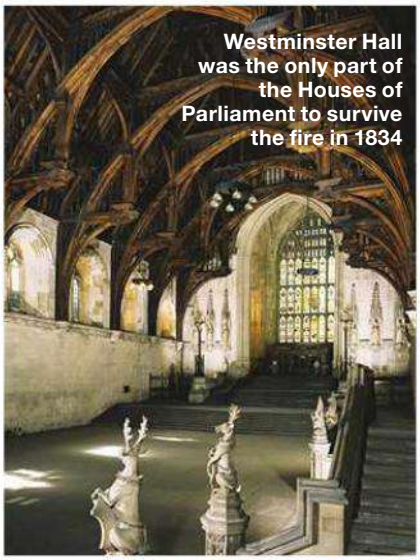
5 The Palace of Westminster London

● *www.parliament.uk*

The initial group of conspirators numbered five, but by October 1605 it had grown to 13. The last to be recruited was Francis Tresham, a wealthy Catholic gentleman. Tresham, though, was far from convinced by the plan and tried to persuade the plotters to abandon it. Many believe that it was he who sent the letter to his brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle, warning him that something was afoot.

Monteagle took the note to Robert Cecil, the secretary of state. Cecil oversaw a powerful intelligence network and it is possible that he knew of the plot already. In fact, theories persist that he himself had penned the letter in order to test Monteagle's loyalty. One of the plotters, Thomas Winter, got wind of the Monteagle letter and told Catesby the news, but the ringleader refused to be dissuaded from the plan.

Cecil took the message to King James, but nothing was done with the initially. Then, on 4 November, the Earl of Suffolk made an inspection of the vaults. There they found Fawkes, together with a great deal of firewood that was covering the gunpowder. King James ordered a second search at midnight. This time Fawkes was arrested and the hidden gunpowder barrels discovered.



Westminster Hall was the only part of the Houses of Parliament to survive the fire in 1834

The Houses of Parliament were saved. In 1834, a great fire destroyed most of the buildings, except for Westminster Hall. Charles Barry redesigned the Palace of Westminster in the following decades and it is now open to visitors.

6 The Tower of London London

● *www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon*

It was William the Conqueror who started work on London's famous tower in the late 11th century. Over its history it has held numerous celebrity prisoners such as Walter Ralegh, Thomas More and the Kray twins. One of the most notorious inmates was Guy Fawkes who arrived here shortly after he had been caught with the barrels of gunpowder.

Initially Fawkes refused to betray his fellow conspirators but after a few days he relented and provided his interrogators with the information they wanted. James I had personally authorised the use of "the gentler tortures" and an examination of Fawkes's signature on his first and second confessions suggests he had been badly shaken by the experience.

Other plotters who were subsequently rounded up also found themselves in the Tower. Here they languished while awaiting trial. Francis Tresham sickened and died in December before he could take the stand. Eight others, including Fawkes, went on trial on 27 January 1606, charged with high treason.

Guilty verdicts were announced for the eight men and the executions were carried out on 30 and 31 January at St Paul's Churchyard and Old Palace Yard, Westminster. As befitted traitors, Fawkes and his colleagues were hung, drawn and quartered.

The remains of the plotters were attached to spikes on London Bridge as a stark warning to future conspirators.



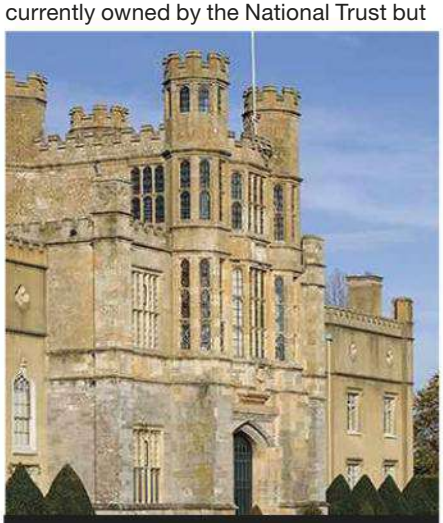
Guy Fawkes was just one of the Tower's well-known prisoners

ALAMY; DREAMSTIME

7 Coughton Court Warwickshire

● *www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coughton-court*

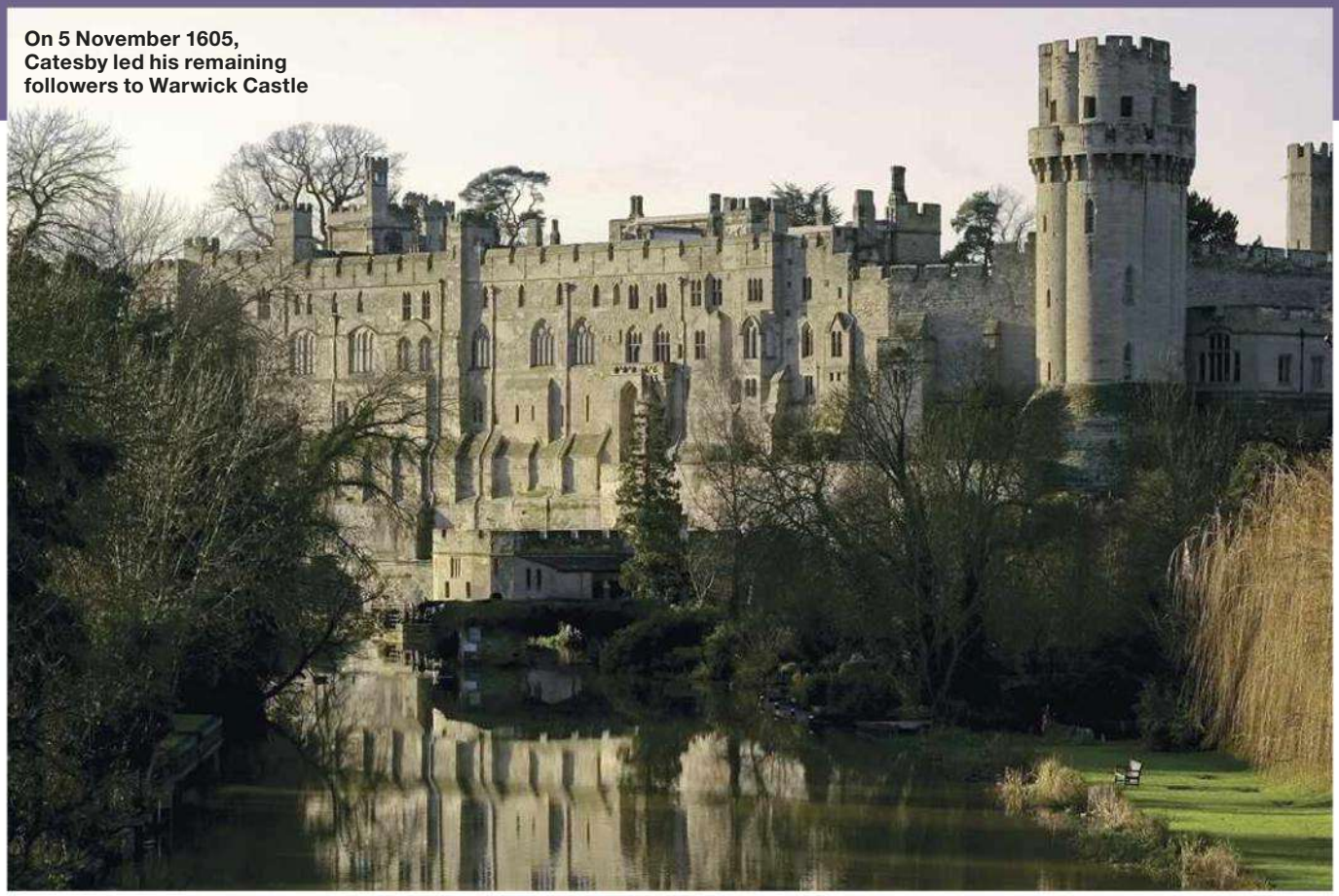
Coughton Court is a stately Tudor house currently owned by the National Trust but still inhabited by the Throckmorton family who have resided here since 1409. The Throckmortons are said to be the oldest Catholic family in England and unusually they have managed to keep hold of many of their religious treasures, some of which are now on display.



Coughton Court was rented by Sir Everard Digby, one of the plotters

In 1605, the court was being rented by Sir Everard Digby, one of the gunpowder plotters. On 6 November, he was on the move with Catesby when word got to the house of Fawkes's arrest. Among those assembled there were Digby's wife and Henry Garnett, England's leading Jesuit. Garnett had known of the plot and had advised against it, but all the same he found himself implicated and a wanted man.

Garnett left Coughton in late November, ending up in Hindlip Hall near Worcester. There he was captured on 27 January 1606, as part of a round-up of Jesuits, and taken to the Tower of London.



On 5 November 1605, Catesby led his remaining followers to Warwick Castle

8 Warwick Castle Warwickshire

● *www.warwick-castle.co.uk*

News of Fawkes's arrest spread quickly, causing the flight of Catesby and the other plotters away from London. Had their scheme gone as planned, the conspirators hoped to ignite a Catholic uprising in the Midlands, with King James's nine-year-old daughter Elizabeth as a potential new queen. Even though Fawkes was in custody, Catesby resolved to go ahead with his planned insurrection.

On the night of 5 November, Catesby stopped off at Warwick Castle to steal horses and then spent the next couple of days with a dwindling group of followers, seeking support for their cause. Yet the Catholic hierarchy showed little interest in the revolt. With their dreams in tatters, Catesby's men arrived at Holbeche House in Staffordshire on 7 November where they resolved to make their final stand.

This last hurrah began badly when some excess gunpowder exploded while it was being dried out near a fire, injuring several of the group. Then, on the morning of 8 November, 200 men led by the Sheriff of Worcestershire arrived at Holbeche and surrounded the house. Catesby and a few others charged outside to meet them and were shot down. It is said that the same bullet that killed Thomas Percy also went through the body of Catesby. As the leader of the plot was dying, he reportedly staggered to the house's chapel and clutched an image of the Virgin Mary.

At the time that Catesby visited Warwick Castle, the medieval fortress was in a state of some disrepair. Over the subsequent centuries, it underwent several phases of intense restoration including much recent work. Nowadays the castle has repositioned itself as a major heritage attraction boasting a ghoulish dungeon and a princess tower.



Leading plotter Thomas Winter was apprehended at Hagley

9 Hagley Hall Worcestershire

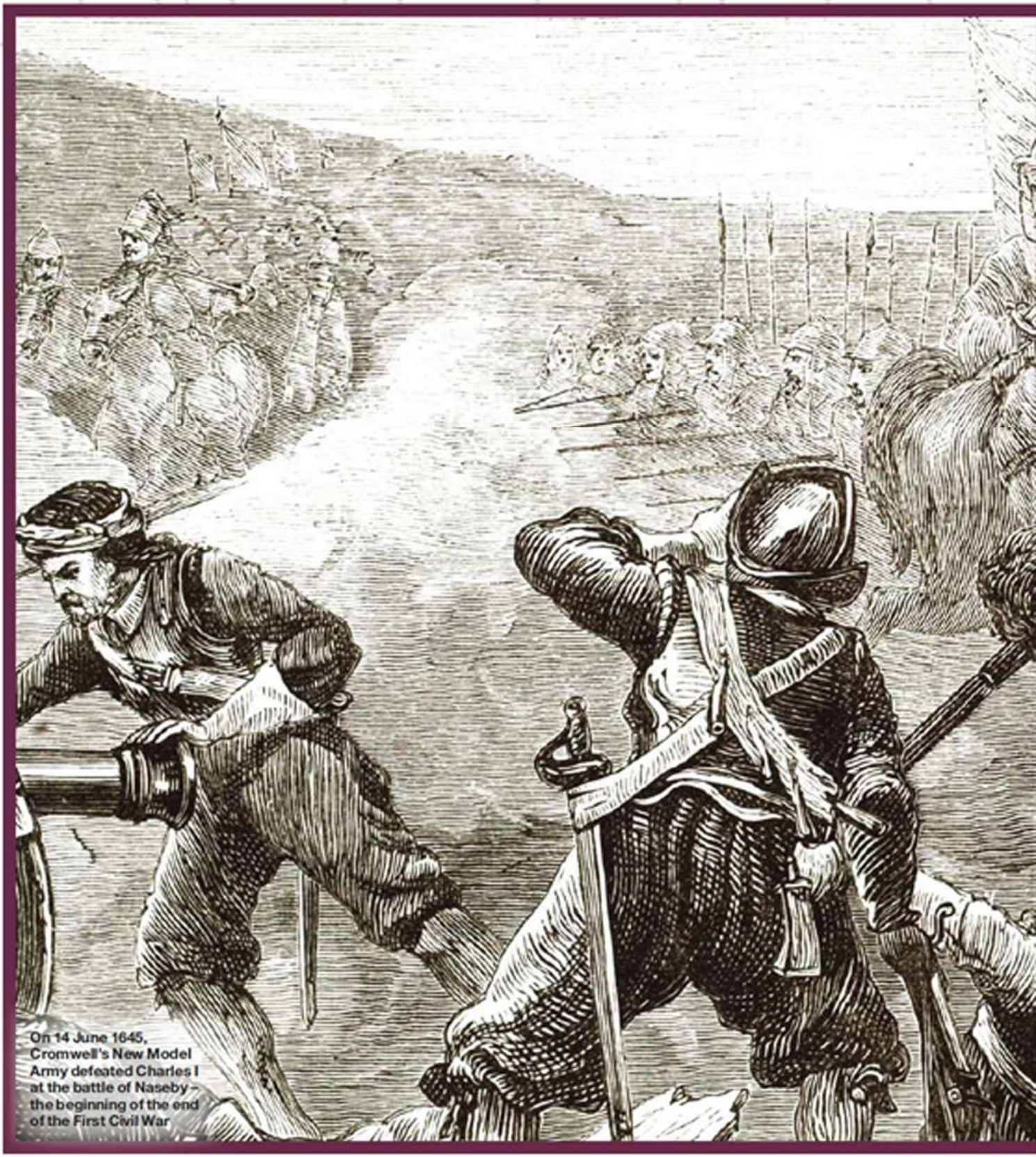
● *www.hagleyhall.com*

Not all of the gunpowder conspirators met their end with Catesby. One leading plotter, Thomas Winter, was injured in the melee and taken to London as a captive for questioning. His brother Robert ran from Holbeche on the night of 7 November and then spent two months in hiding around Worcestershire before he was apprehended at Hagley. He too was hauled off to London to meet his fate.

Hagley has been in the hands of the Lyttelton family since the mid-16th century. The current building was largely constructed in the Georgian era under the auspices of George Lyttelton, a one-time chancellor of the exchequer. It is a splendid Palladian mansion, elegantly furnished and complemented by landscaped gardens.

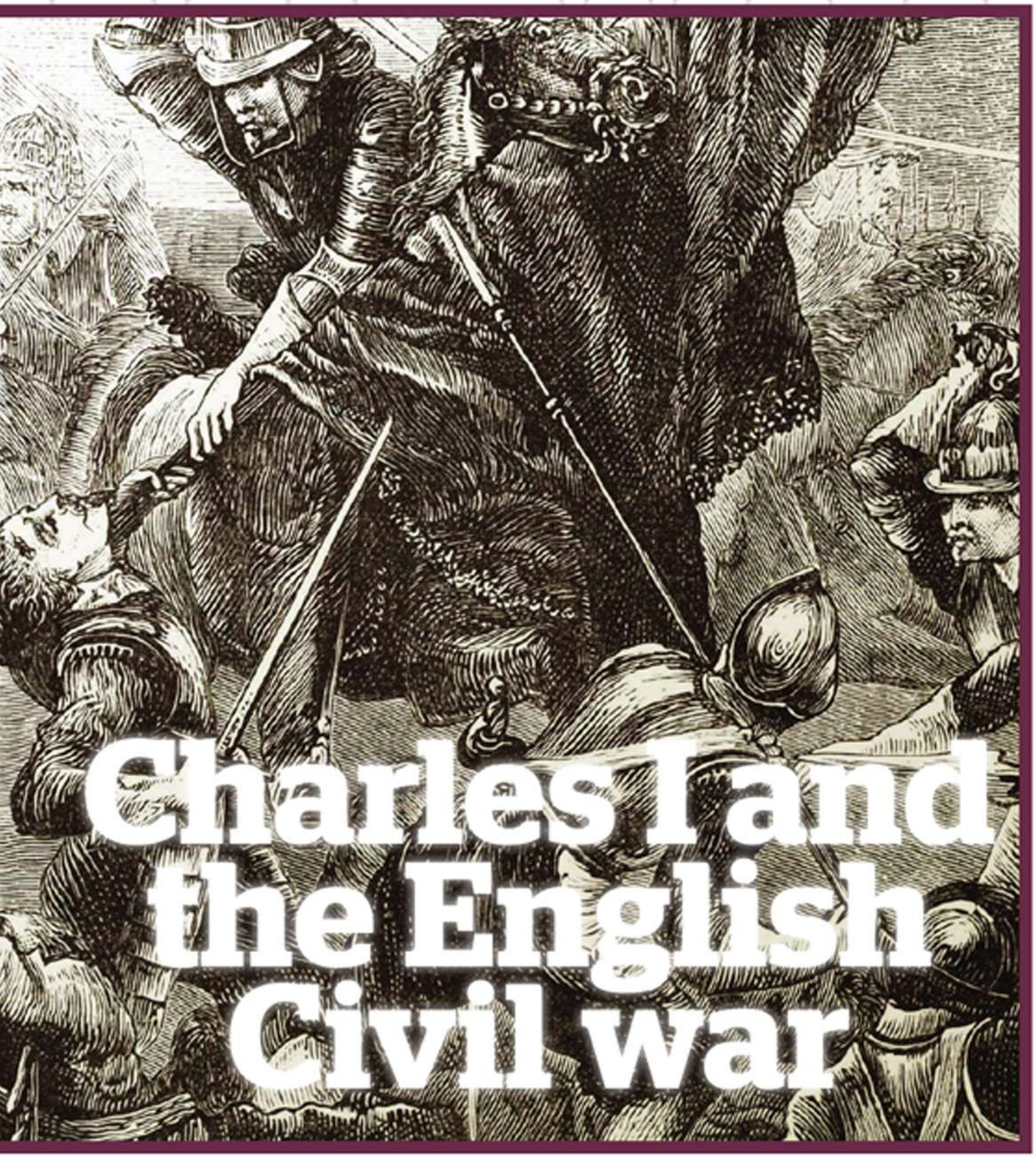
DREAMSTIME, RICHARD ROGERSON

CHARLES I
ENGLISH C



On 14 June 1645, Cromwell's New Model Army defeated Charles I at the battle of Naseby – the beginning of the end of the First Civil War

ALAN KING ENGRAVING/ALAMY


Charles I and
the English
Civil war

BRITAIN'S CIVIL WARS: THE 15 KEY MOMENTS

Britain was engulfed by war in the mid-17th century. Three leading historians of the conflict – **Micheál Ó Siochrú**, **John Adamson** and **Blair Worden** – consider the pivotal points

1. The National Covenant 28 February 1638

When Charles I's unpopular religious innovations sparked revolt in Scotland

In 1637–38, attempts by King Charles I to impose religious uniformity throughout his diverse realms encountered organised political resistance in Scotland.

On 28 February 1638, a meeting at Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh adopted a National Covenant that rejected the religious innovations of William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, specifically those relating to the introduction of a Book of Common Prayer.

The Covenanters also sought to unite Scotland in opposition to absentee monarchy – as Charles I, though born in Scotland, ruled from England. They declared their loyalty to the crown but seized control of the kingdom and prepared to defend themselves.

Their actions triggered a series of bloody wars. Initially at least, the success of the covenanters in the Bishops' Wars (1639–40) encouraged opponents of the king in England and this led to the recall of the Westminster parliament for the first time since 1629. Leading Irish Catholic rebels later admitted to being inspired by the Scottish example.

The developing crisis expanded the ambitions of the Covenanters. In early 1642, following an insurrection by the Catholic Irish, they sent a large army to protect Protestant settlers in Ireland's northern province of Ulster.

In September 1643, the Covenanters decided to export their revolution, signing the Solemn League and Covenant with the English parliament. A few months later, 20,000 Scottish troops marched south across the border, effectively turning the tide of the civil war in England. The National Covenant, therefore, acted as a catalyst for major upheaval in all three Stuart kingdoms during the early 1640s.

Micheál Ó Siochrú



A Covenanter petitions Charles I in this 17th-century woodcut

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

2. Scottish Covenanters invade England August 1640

When a Scottish army attacked its southern neighbour on the invitation of dissident English peers



Robert Rich, one of the 'traitors of 1640'

Towards the end of June 1640, seven English noblemen committed treason by writing to a foreign government and urging it to undertake an invasion of England. The foreign government was that of Scotland, which had risen in rebellion against Charles I's political and religious policies three years earlier.

The Scots had already demonstrated that resistance to Charles I could be successful. They had created a de facto republic north of the River Tweed.

The treasonous English peers who wrote to the Covenanter government in the summer of 1640 aimed to achieve a similar emasculation of royal authority in England. Led by three daring and charismatic figures – Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick; Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford; and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex – the dissident noblemen provided the spokesmen and organisational leadership for a much larger body of dissent, alienated by the policies of Charles's decade-long 'Personal Rule'.

From that treasonous letter of invitation, a series of momentous consequences followed: the Scottish Covenanters' invasion and occupation of the north of England; the military humiliation of the king's forces; a financial crisis that made the summons of a parliament all but unavoidable (in November 1640, parliament met again, and proceeded to dismantle the structure of Charles's personal rule); and a public threat from the dissident nobles to call that parliament on their own authority if the king refused.

Yet the new parliament's ability to create a stable new political order was compromised by the treasonous circumstances of its calling.

With the king intent on revenge, the 'traitors of 1640' wouldn't stop short of stripping Charles I of his personal executive powers. And, for the potential targets of Charles's wrath, that meant creating a de facto republic in England no less dangerous in the eyes of many than the 'personal monarchy' that it was intended to replace. ***John Adamson***

3. The prosecution of the Earl of Strafford March–May 1641

When parliament put one of the king's chief henchman to death

Of all Charles I's counsellors, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, was the most intelligent, indifferent to the traditional rule of law, and readiest to use force to maintain the authoritarian monarchy that the king had begun constructing during the 1630s. So, for the new parliament's reformists, the neutralising of Strafford – by debarring him permanently from office or by exacting the death penalty – became a necessary precondition of any lasting settlement with the king.

Staged in Westminster Hall in March and April 1641 before an audience that ran into thousands, Strafford's trial was the parliamentary leaders' first exercise in public theatre. The earl stood proxy for the king's government during the 1630s, with the Lords sitting as his judges and the entire House of Commons arranged as a tableau vivant of the nation presiding in judgement on the old regime.

But the trial's managers had not counted on Strafford's brilliance in the dock. When an acquittal eventually seemed the possible outcome, they abandoned the trial and took up the cruder weapon of an act of attainder – by which the parliament simply declared his crime and stipulated the death penalty.

Even this might not have brought about Strafford's death, had not Charles I attempted a (characteristically botched) coup d'état, intended to spring Strafford from the Tower and effect a forcible dissolution of the parliament. Strafford was beheaded on Tower Hill, before a festive crowd of over 100,000, on 12 May 1641. Warwick and Essex were with him on the scaffold, in order to be able to observe their victory at close quarters. ***John Adamson***



A c1634 oil on canvas of the Earl of Strafford, an uncompromising supporter of the old regime

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, WORLD HISTORY ARCHIVE/ALAMY

4. The battle of Julianstown

29 November 1641

When a brutal ambush of government troops signalled a Catholic Irish rebellion

In October 1641, after decades of political and religious discrimination, as well as large-scale dispossession and dislocation, the Catholic Irish of Ulster rebelled.

On a chilly morning in late November, a relief column of about 600 government troops moved slowly towards the besieged town of Drogheda, 30 miles to the north of Dublin. Suddenly, out of the morning mist, a significantly larger rebel force, commanded by Philip McHugh O'Reilly, ambushed the column and slaughtered all the infantry. Only a handful of cavalry managed to escape.

Although a relatively insignificant encounter in military terms, the battle of Julianstown marked a major turning point in the Irish conflict. The victory convinced the Old English Catholics of the Pale, descendants of the original Anglo-Norman colonists of the 12th/13th centuries, to throw in their lot with the rebels, thus transforming a regional uprising into a national rebellion.

Soon after, at a carefully stage-managed meeting nearby on the Hill of Crofty, the Ulster Irish and Old English formally joined forces, declaring their intention to defend the ancient liberties of the kingdom and the prerogatives of the king. The statement that they belonged to "the same religion and the same nation" was greeted with wild applause.

This signalled the emergence of the Catholic confederate association, which controlled most of the island during the 1640s, the only example of sustained self-government by the Catholic Irish prior to the 20th century. ***Micheál Ó Siochrú***



A contemporary engraving shows Catholics killing Irish Protestants in 1641

5. The Adventurers Act 19 March 1642

When parliament determined to fund a military campaign that would result in the devastation of Irish Catholicism

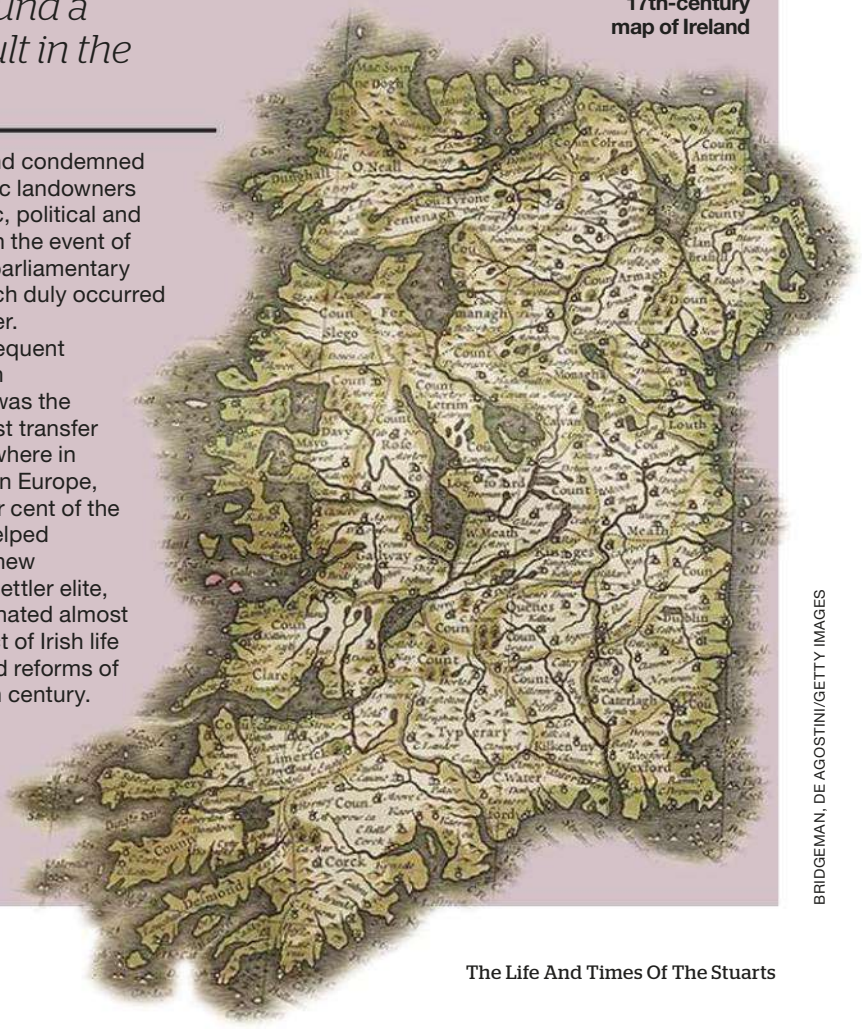
In March 1642, Henry Jones, dean of Clogher and head of a government commission charged with collecting witness statements from those fleeing the rebellion in Ireland, arrived in London. He presented a report to parliament describing a massacre of Protestant settlers which, combined with the sensationalist outpourings of the newssheets, further convinced MPs at Westminster of the need for action.

On 19 March, King Charles I, under intense political pressure to take a firm line on Ireland, assented to the Adventurers Act. The act sought to raise money for a military campaign in Ireland, using 2,500,000 acres of forfeited Irish Catholic land as collateral. Parliament alone, however, could declare the rebellion at an end and dispose of the forfeited land, powers hitherto reserved only to the monarchy.

The king's acquiescence in this matter precluded the possibility of a compromise settlement to the conflict in Ireland and condemned Irish Catholic landowners to economic, political and social ruin in the event of an English parliamentary victory, which duly occurred 12 years later.

The subsequent Cromwellian settlement was the single largest transfer of land anywhere in early modern Europe, some 60 per cent of the total, and helped establish a new Protestant settler elite, which dominated almost every aspect of Irish life until the land reforms of the late 19th century. ***Micheál Ó Siochrú***

Cartographer Willem Blaeu's 17th-century map of Ireland



BRIDGEMAN, DE AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES

6. The battle of Edgehill

23 October 1642

When a 'test of arms' descended into a bloody, chaotic melee

After relations between the king and the leaders of parliament broke down irretrievably at the beginning of 1642, both sides saw a test of arms as the likeliest way of determining the conflict. Few, however, thought that large-scale mobilisation by the 'king's party' and the 'parliament's party' would necessarily end in widespread killing.

There was every reason to believe that the War of 1642 would be much like the recent wars of 1639 and 1640 against the Scots. One side or the other would concede once they saw the military superiority of the other (as Charles had done when confronted by the Scots in 1639). Or, as one privy councillor put it, if matters did actually come to a fight, "one day of battle will decide under what power or person we must all hereafter breathe".

Edgehill confounded all these expectations. Fought near the village of Kineton, in Warwickshire, on Sunday 23 October 1642, it was a chaotic melee, long and viciously fought, and with heavy casualties on both sides.

Instead of the clearly defined outcome that both sides had expected, neither party emerged with a decisive war-winning advantage. Both sets of combatants were confronted with the choice they had all hoped to avoid: between ending the bloodshed and coming to some form of compromise at the negotiating table; or fighting on – with all the perils and bloodshed that course entailed – until one side or the other achieved an 'absolute', definitive victory. ***John Adamson***

7. The reform of the parliamentarian armies October–November 1644

When a parliamentarian clique bent on securing a decisive victory ousted their commander-in-chief

By the second anniversary of the battle of Edgehill, in October 1644, neither side was significantly closer to achieving decisive victory. Escalation of the conflict during 1643 into a three-kingdoms war (with the king seeking to enlist Irish Catholic troops and parliament responding by calling in the Covenanter Scots) had raised the stakes, but had still failed to deliver an unambiguous victor.

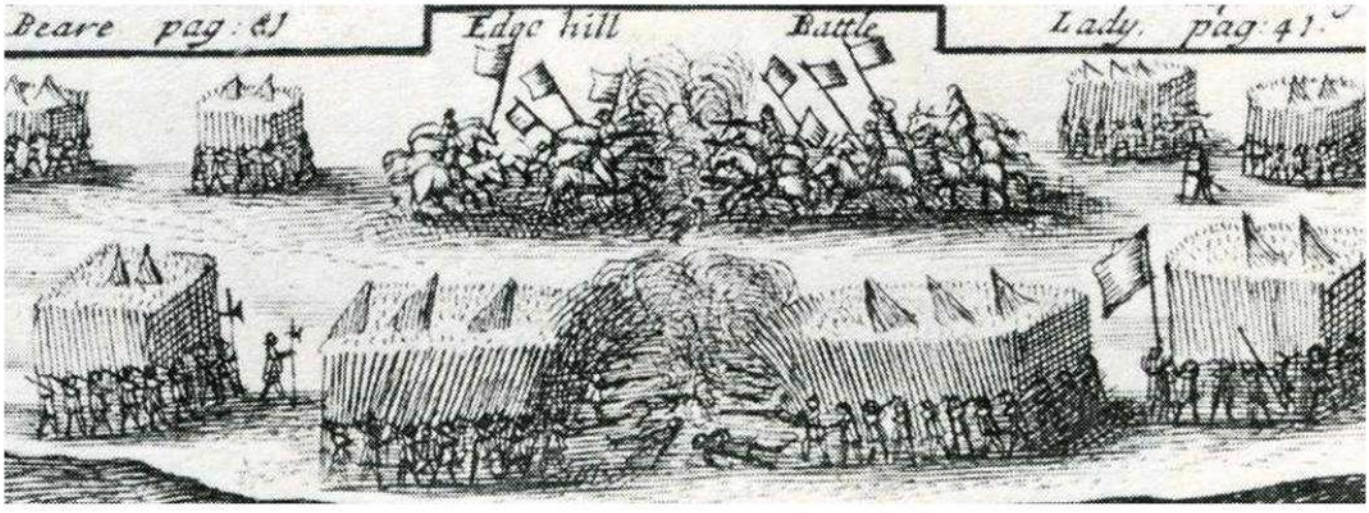
Blame for parliament's failure fell, at Westminster, on its commander-in-chief, the Earl of Essex, whose reluctance to fight the war to an 'absolute victory' was explained by his critics not as a failure of the army's resources, but of its commander's resolve.

In the autumn of 1644, those critics turned on him. Led by an influential group of peers and Commons-men – known as the Committee of Both Kingdoms – they devised a bold series of plans: to demote Essex and most of the senior commanders he had appointed, and create the sort of well-funded and supplied fighting force on which, they believed, a decisive victory over the king depended.



As commander-in-chief of parliamentarian forces, Thomas Fairfax's remit was to crush the royalist armies

What followed was a legislative and organisational coup. By the spring of 1645, six months of debate at Westminster had transformed the political control of the war. Essex was replaced as commander-in-chief by Sir Thomas Fairfax and, through the 'Self-Denying Ordinance', almost all the senior commanders appointed since 1642 were ousted from their posts. A clique had captured control of parliament's war-effort and intended to use that control to determine the government and godliness of postwar England. ***John Adamson***



ALAMY X2

"Edgehill confounded all expectations: it produced heavy casualties on both sides but no clear winner"

8. The battle of Naseby

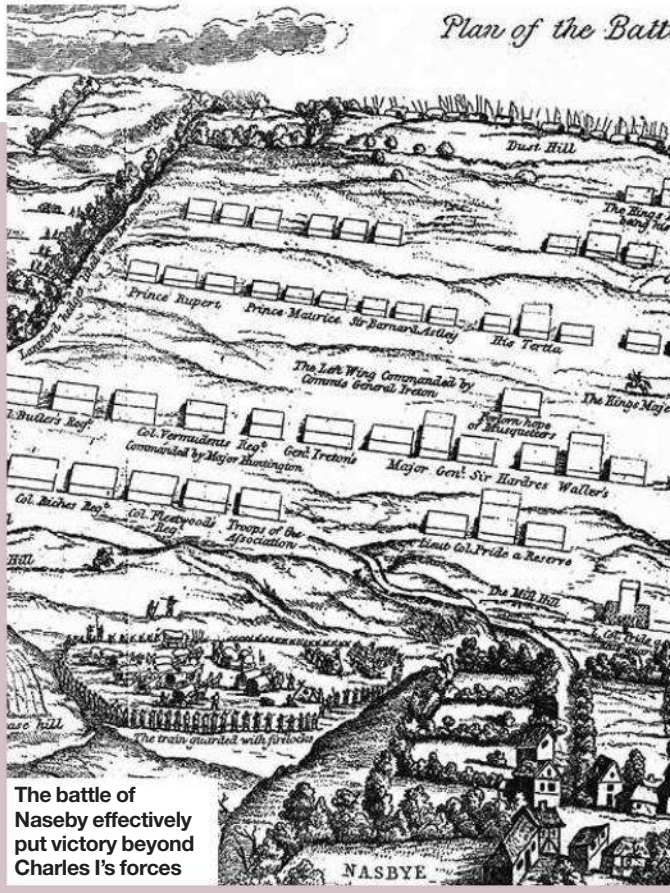
June 1645

When a longed-for parliamentary victory sent the king fleeing to the Welsh borders

Naseby was all that Edgehill had been intended to be: that 'one day of battle' that decided the outcome of the war once and for all. Fairfax's newly modelled army inflicted a crushing defeat on the royalist forces and sent a demoralised king to find refuge in the Marquess of Worcester's vast fortress, Ragland Castle, in the Welsh borders – ironically, the very bolthole that the king had planned for his retreat if he had lost control of southern England in the autumn of 1640.

Following further reverses, Charles eventually surrendered to the Scots in May 1646. The capitulation of the king's former capital, Oxford, the following month marked the end of the First Civil War.

But Naseby constituted more than simply the longed-for victory to end the war. To many (even to those of the king's party), it was a manifest judgement of God – the Old Testament 'God of Battles' – on the justice of the competing royalist and parliamentarian causes. And for those at Westminster who had backed the controversial army reforms of the previous winter, it provided the prospect of remaking the 'commonwealth' of England in a form that was republican in all but name. ***John Adamson***



The battle of Naseby effectively put victory beyond Charles I's forces

9. The Agreement of the People 1647

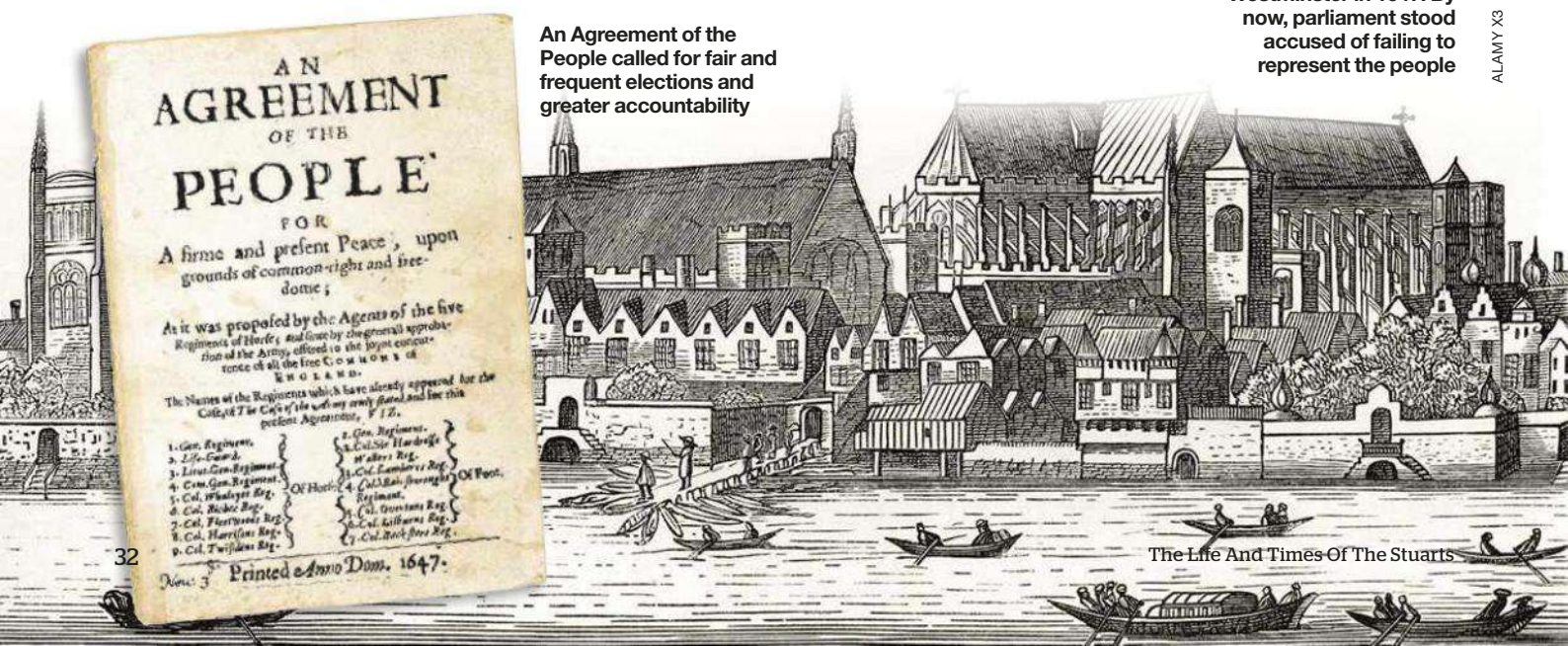
When London's citizens demanded that parliament introduce radical reforms

In 1647, the year following the end of the First Civil War, the revolution took a new turn. Previously, the conflict had been purely between King Charles I and parliament. Now it was also a battle between the state, whether run by king or parliament, and the citizen.

Parliament had won the war by methods that made the prewar centralising policies of Charles I look tame, creating a Puritan church government as intolerant as the Anglican one before it.

In the autumn, New Model soldiers and London citizens, who had eagerly supported parliament in the war, submitted a charter of liberty, the Agreement of the People, to the army's high command. It demanded radical parliamentary reform, which would guarantee fair and frequent elections and establish the accountability of parliaments, or 'representatives' as they were henceforth to be called, to the electorate. And it proclaimed 'native rights' of the people, chief among them freedom of worship, which no government might invade.

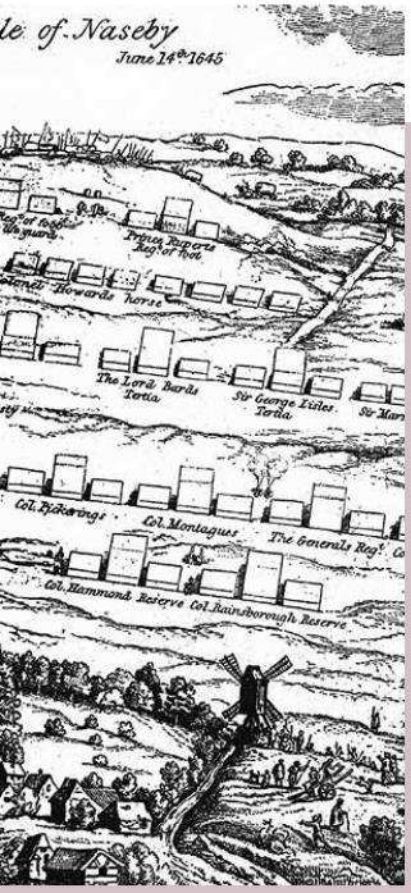
Parliament, which had claimed to fight the war as the representative of the people, now found the idea of representation aimed at itself. Though the Levellers, as the promoters of the agreement were derisively called, were crushed by the army high command, their ideas touched a nerve in national feeling. ***Blair Worden***



An Agreement of the People called for fair and frequent elections and greater accountability

Westminster in 1647. By now, parliament stood accused of failing to represent the people

ALAMY X3



10. Pride's Purge December 1648

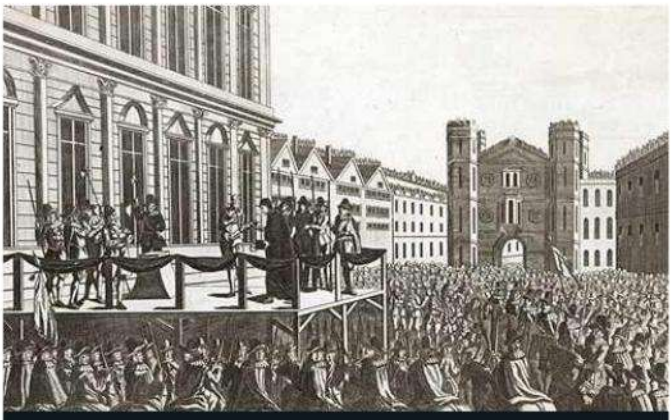
When the New Model Army scuppered MPs' attempts to restore Charles to the throne

In fighting the king, parliament aimed to bring him to order, not to destroy him. It promised to restore him on terms that would guarantee his subjects' safety and religion.

In late 1648, parliament finally wrung concessions from the captive Charles that a majority in the Commons was willing to accept. However, the New Model Army wasn't in the mood for compromise. Having fought the Second Civil War against the king, it had resolved to bring him to justice.

On 6 December, leaders of the 'peace party' found their entry to the Commons blocked by soldiers under Colonel Thomas Pride and were imprisoned. Over the following days, Pride and his men excluded large numbers of other MPs from the House.

The army's actions transformed the cause for which Roundheads had fought. In the following months, the MPs whom the army allowed to remain at Westminster destroyed the constitution that parliament had pledged itself to preserve. They had the king tried and executed, they abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords, and they turned England into a 'Commonwealth and Free State'. ***Blair Worden***



Charles I is beheaded at Whitehall on 30 January 1649

11. The declaration of the Scottish parliament 5 February 1649

When Scottish Covenanters set themselves on a collision course with the English Commonwealth



Charles II, c1675, shown in coloured chalks on paper after a portrait by Sir Peter Lely

ALAMY, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

The public execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649 was a truly revolutionary act, followed within a matter of days by the abolition of the monarchy. The new Commonwealth regime claimed jurisdiction over England and the allegedly dependent kingdom of Ireland. Their actions, however, effectively severed the personal union, established under James VI and I, which had bound the kingdoms of England and Scotland together for almost 50 years.

The Scottish Covenanters now faced three choices. They could replicate the decision to abolish monarchy, but few supported such a move. Alternatively, Charles I's successor could be declared King of Scotland alone, but the presence of Scottish settlers in Ireland complicated matters, as did the ongoing commitment of the Covenanters to religious reform in the three kingdoms.

On 5 February 1649, therefore, the Scottish parliament signalled its opposition to developments in England by declaring Charles II King of Great Britain, France and Ireland. This placed the Covenanters on a direct collision course with the Commonwealth.

The Scottish declaration meant that war with England could not be avoided, particularly once Charles II arrived in Scotland in June 1650. The actions of the Covenanters and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent conquest of Scotland ensured that the Anglo-Scottish union survived the English experiment in republican government. ***Micheál Ó Siochrú***

12. The storming of Drogheda 11 September 1649

When Cromwell's massacre of Catholic and Protestant royalists sparked a period of unprecedented bloodletting in Ireland

On 11 September 1649, soldiers of the New Model Army, commanded by Oliver Cromwell, stormed the town of Drogheda. The defenders, comprising Irish and English royalists, both Catholic and Protestant, repulsed the first assault but eventually fell back from the walls. Within a matter of hours, the parliamentary forces had slaughtered almost the entire garrison of 3,500 men, alongside an indeterminate number of civilians.

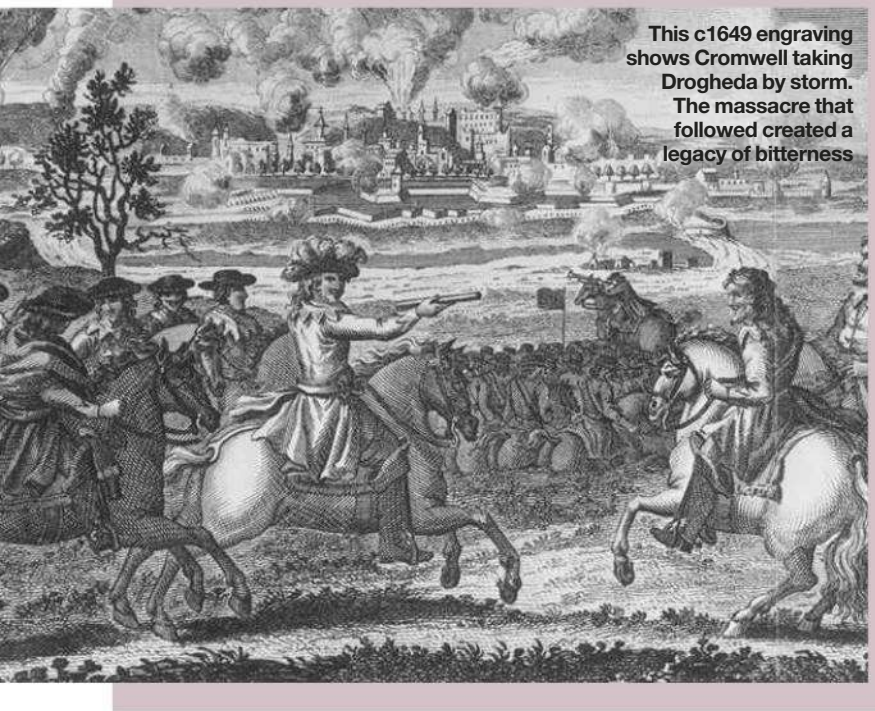
The massacre created a legacy of bitterness that persists to this day. Cromwell justified the mass killing, which breached all contemporary codes of conduct, on two grounds. In the first instance, he saw it as the "righteous judgement of God against those barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood", allegedly murdering thousands of Protestant settlers during the early months of the 1641 rebellion.

None of Drogheda's defenders, however, had taken part in the initial uprising. Secondly, Cromwell hoped that his harsh tactics might "prevent the effusion of blood for the future" by terrifying the enemy into submission. In fact, his actions had exactly the opposite effect, stiffening Catholic Irish resolve to resist to the bitter end.

Events at Drogheda, therefore, undoubtedly prolonged the Cromwellian conquest. This phase of the war lasted for four years, resulting in the death of almost a quarter of Ireland's population, the biggest demographic disaster in its history.

Micheál Ó Siochrú

"This phase of the war resulted in the death of almost a quarter of Ireland's population"



This c1649 engraving shows Cromwell taking Drogheda by storm. The massacre that followed created a legacy of bitterness



King Charles II hides in an oak tree following his defeat at the battle of Worcester, as shown in a 1660 engraving

13. The battle of Worcester

September 1651

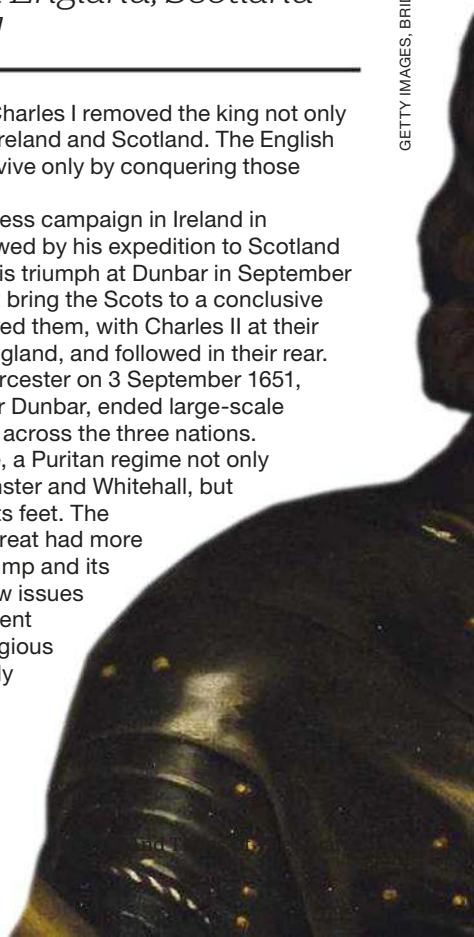
When Cromwell effectively ended royalist resistance throughout England, Scotland and Ireland

The execution of Charles I removed the king not only of England but of Ireland and Scotland. The English republic could survive only by conquering those other nations.

Cromwell's ruthless campaign in Ireland in 1649-50 was followed by his expedition to Scotland in 1650-51. After his triumph at Dunbar in September 1650, he could not bring the Scots to a conclusive battle. So he allowed them, with Charles II at their head, to invade England, and followed in their rear. Their defeat at Worcester on 3 September 1651, exactly a year after Dunbar, ended large-scale royalist resistance across the three nations.

For the first time, a Puritan regime not only occupied Westminster and Whitehall, but had the nation at its feet. The external royalist threat had more or less held the Rump and its army together. Now issues of political settlement and social and religious reform would fatally divide them.

Blair Worden



GETTY IMAGES, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

14. The dissolution of the Long Parliament

April 1653

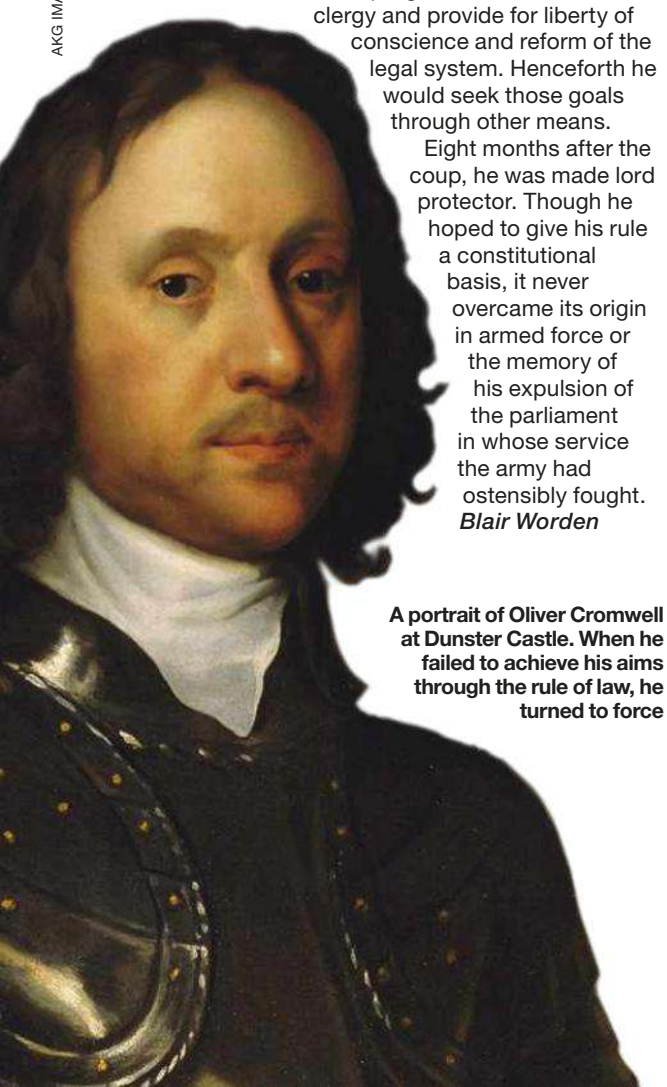
When Cromwell ejected MPs from the Commons – and locked the doors behind them

Oliver Cromwell destroyed both sides of the civil war. In January 1649, he steered through the trial and execution of the king. On 20 April 1653, he removed the Long Parliament, which had sat since 1640. It was no less revolutionary a step. After a vitriolic speech against its members, he called his musketeers into the Commons to clear the chamber and had the doors locked to prevent their return.

To Cromwell, forms of government, whether royal or parliamentary, were means to ends of godliness and justice, to be used or cast aside as they served or failed those purposes. The 'Rump' of the parliament left behind by Pride's Purge had antagonised the army. Cromwell looked to it to implement a programme to achieve religious reform, which would purge and Puritanise the clergy and provide for liberty of conscience and reform of the legal system. Henceforth he would seek those goals through other means.

Eight months after the coup, he was made lord protector. Though he hoped to give his rule a constitutional basis, it never overcame its origin in armed force or the memory of his expulsion of the parliament in whose service the army had ostensibly fought.

Blair Worden



AKG IMAGES, ALAMY

A portrait of Oliver Cromwell at Dunster Castle. When he failed to achieve his aims through the rule of law, he turned to force



Cromwell's unprovoked attack on Hispaniola proved to be an unmitigated disaster

15. The Hispaniola Expedition December 1654

When Cromwell's crusade against Catholic darkness suffered a morale-sapping reverse

Cromwell won all his important battles, sometimes against daunting odds, and saw his victories as witnesses to God's approval of his cause. It was not, in Cromwell's eyes, a cause confined to England or even Britain. It was a European, or possibly even a worldwide, struggle between Protestant light and Catholic darkness.

Charles I had shocked Puritans by his friendship with Spain during the Thirty Years' War. Then the Rump had fought an epic naval war with fellow Protestants, the Dutch, who were newly liberated from Spanish sovereignty.

When he became protector, Cromwell ended that conflict and took on the Spanish empire in the New World. In December 1654, he sent an expedition to launch an unprovoked attack on Hispaniola, the island nowadays shared between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Ill-planned, ill-led and ill-disciplined, it was humiliatingly routed by a handful of Spaniards.

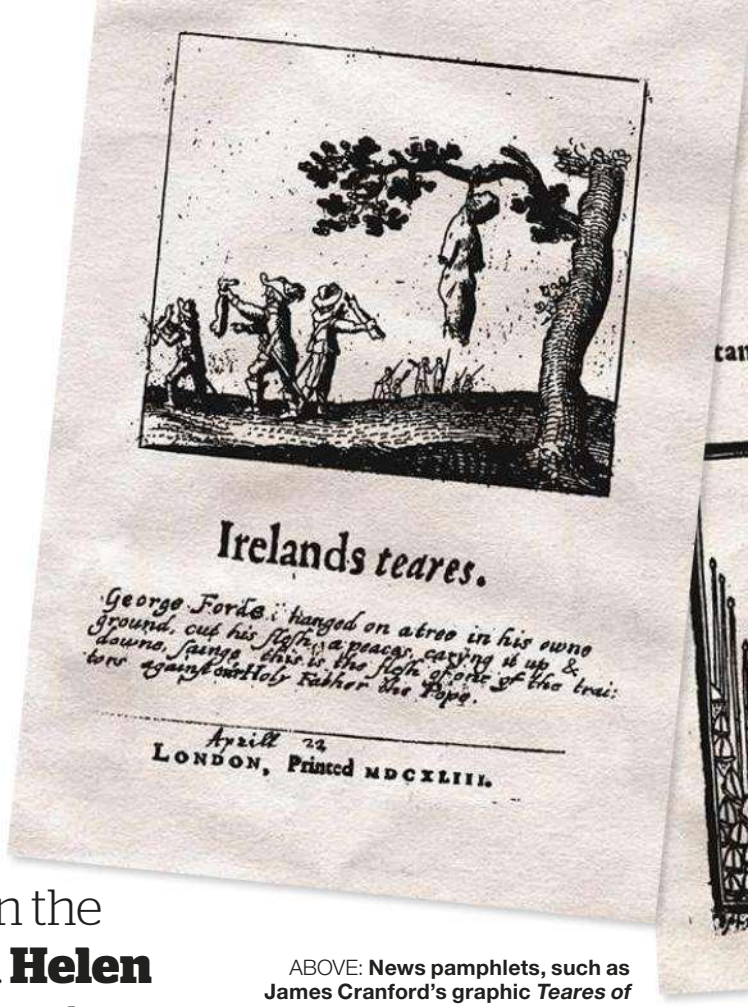
The expedition force did limp on to take Jamaica, and later, when the war with Spain reached Europe, the English won naval victories and acquired the Channel base of Dunkirk. But the defeat at Hispaniola, which any Puritan was bound to interpret as a rebuke by God for the government's or the nation's sinfulness, was a terrible blow to Cromwell's, and his government's, morale.

Blair Worden

"The defeat at Hispaniola was a blow to Cromwell's, and his government's, morale"

Micheál Ó Siochrú is associate professor of history at Trinity College Dublin. He is the author of *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (Faber, 2009)
John Adamson is a fellow in history at Peterhouse, University of Cambridge. His book *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* was published by Phoenix in 2009
Blair Worden is emeritus fellow of St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. He is the author of *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (OUP, March 2012)

The **paper wars** of the 1640s



ABOVE: **News pamphlets, such as James Cranford's graphic *Teares of Ireland* (engraving, 1642), helped fan the flames of civil war** RIGHT: **When the king raised his army in 1642, people throughout the country heard about it in news pamphlets**

The English Civil War was fought in the press as much as on the battlefield. **Helen Weinstein** considers how propaganda created a climate of terror in England

The English Civil War in the 1640s killed proportionately far more of the population than the First World War. As a nation, we have forgotten about the vast scale of casualties, devastation and disease caused by the warfare of the period. And yet the destruction was on English soil. Research shows that the press was as fundamental to the English Civil War as pikes and muskets. This was the first war to be played out in the media as well as on the battlefield.

It started when the Thirty Years' War was raging in Europe, a campaign that pitted Protestant against Catholic. London news pamphlets reported on the terror and slaughter, and English Protestants read this news and worried that Catholic forces would invade England.

One such reader was a craftsman in the city of London. Nehemiah Wallington was a woodturner, born in 1598 in the parish of St Leonards, a few yards north of London Bridge. He was 44 years old when war broke out in 1642, and he filled 2,600 pages with his written "reflections".

A nation drunk with misery

It was the siege of the German city of Magdeburg where Catholic forces were besieging Protestants that gave Nehemiah Wallington his first experience of news: "In the yeere 1638 I had a booke come to my hand of the miserable estate of Germany, wherein as in a glasse you might see the mourn full face of this our sister nation now drunke with misery & who knowes how fast the cup may passe round Gods arrows?"

Wallington was terrified by the stories. He copied them out and he wrote about his feelings. Wallington feared for the future of Protestantism – with good reason. In one day alone, it was reported that 20,000 innocent civilians were massacred in the German city of Magdeburg.

"They have tied burning Matches betwixt their fingers – to their noses, tongues, jaws, breasts, legs and secret parts. Yea those parts which nature hideth they have either filled with powder or hung satchels of powder on them, and so giving fire to the same, they have in a horrible manner burst their bellies and killed them".

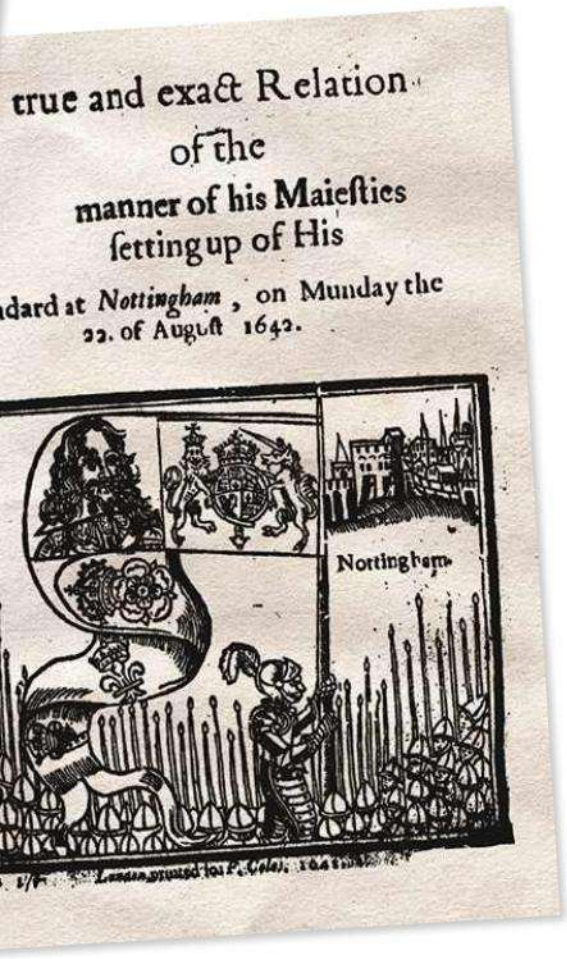
On 22 October 1641, Catholics in Ulster took up arms against Protestant settlers, evicting them from their land and destroying their farms. After the outbreak of the Irish rebellion, the news of atrocities dominated the booksellers. These stories of terror were bought avidly by Londoners. The news pamphlets were whipping up a storm of anxiety about the violence unleashed by "bloodthirsty" Catholics. But now it wasn't in Magdeburg, but much closer to home.

"They came to an Englishman's house, where they slew the man at the door, and afterward they entered the house, where they found the woman and her maid a-brewing. The maid they took, and they threw her in to a boiling cauldron or pan of wort that was over the fire, and her mistress they slew, and cut off her head, and afterward fired the house. Then they took Mr Dabnet, and when they saw he was resolved to die a Protestant, – they pulled open his mouth, and cut out his tongue, and run an hot iron down his throat, and so he died".

These stories, if not fabricated, were often exaggerated. But Wallington believed these reports and he, like others, was worried about what atrocities Catholics might commit on Protestants in England.

The impact of these pamphlets on the Irish Rebellion was to polarise opinion. Moreover, there were rumours that Charles I may have supported the Catholic uprising in Ireland. In parliament, MPs were concerned that the king would use an army against Protestants at home instead of Catholics abroad:

"In agreeing with Papists he has made cause to distance common protestants and those whom they call Puritans. And it is



feared, were he to go to Ireland where he has an army, he may yet bring that army against his own people."

What caused a political revolution was that, rather than submitting this complaint to the king through the normal private channels, a group of MPs led by John Pym decided, on 15 December 1641, to print the 206 grievances and to demand that the king distance himself from the Catholic cause once and for all. This created division between a king's party and an "opposition". And so it was that when the "Grand Remonstrance" was released to the press, ordinary people were able to see for the first time that their rulers were in bitter disagreement. Charles I found out through the press too, like his subjects; this had never happened before.

Getting the people involved

What the parliamentary side did was to ask humble people, like Wallington, to have opinions about those in charge above them. And it used the press to create two sides, effectively asking the public to decide "are you with us, or against us?"

This was an exciting and new debate for the public to read about. Parliamentary politics had never been published before because of censorship. In the first half of 1641, censorship of the press broke down because the official licensor of the press, Archbishop Laud, was arrested and imprisoned. Under unevenly enforced censorship laws, only foreign news reporting had been permitted, but now printers and publishers started to produce domestic news for the first time.

Thus, at the very moment that the Grand Remonstrance was debated and approved for publication by parliament, John Pym was also secretly negotiating with a London publisher called John Thomas. Together they printed the first newspaper to contain reports of the proceedings in parliament.

There is a convergence here. The text which complains of the king's misdoings was published in print, and the context was published in the first topical newspaper in England, discussing in detail the parliamentary debate, and giving the public for the first time a current sheet of domestic news.

When domestic news pamphlets appeared in 1641, Nehemiah Wallington started consuming them voraciously. He called them "little thieves" that stole his money. He became obsessed with collecting news. This was presented to the public in the form of cheap pamphlets that were very readable in eight to 16 pages, and costing a penny or two each.

Fears of terrorism in London

Throughout the winter of 1641, London was on red alert. Almost daily there were rumours of "gunpowder plotters" and fires set by Catholics. These stories were founded on the idea of terror rather than on any evidence, but they show how fearful people were of a Catholic take-over. England was in a state of panic – and printed news reports connected people hundreds of miles apart.

By the time that war broke out, pamphlets were one of the weapons with which the war was fought. Charles I was nervous about the press and it took him a long time to realise that he needed a press machine to fight for his cause. The king had let the parliamentarian side get the upper hand, but after 1642 the Royalists realised that they needed to fight back with their own propaganda. So when the king travelled up north to raise his army, he took a printing press with him:

"As of this day, Monday the 22nd August 1642, his Royal Majesty bought forth his army and did set up his Royal standard in the City of Nottingham".

Nehemiah Wallington never went to war., thus his experience of armed conflict was not from actually participating in the fighting. With the advent of press power, readers who were hundreds of miles away knew about the bloodshed.

Wallington consumed a particular type of news print that plays to his fears about Royalist barbarities. He calls Prince Rupert *"Prince Rober"*, showing that he picked up the stereotypes that were presented to him in the parliamentarian press. This influenced how Wallington's understanding of the war.

It was through news reporting that Wallington was part of the first politically literate generation. This media revolution of the 1640s meant that aristocrats like Brilliana Harley in Herefordshire were reading the same material as the woodturner Wallington in Cheapside. This was the media revolution of the 1640s. H

Helen Weinstein, a historian at Clare Hall, Cambridge, is the creative director of Historyworks production company

> "By the time that war broke out, pamphlets **were one of the weapons** with which war was fought"



Bite him Peper! **Civil War propaganda, a 17th-century woodcut**

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Anthony van Dyck's portrait of Charles I, who tried to take on a series of problems facing the nation "that needed to be addressed"

HAS HISTORY BEEN HARD ON CHARLES I?

For all the king's undoubted flaws, **Tim Harris** explains why we should recognise that the much-maligned monarch was handicapped by both his father's failings and chronic bad luck

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In early October 1640, Charles I, based temporarily at York following defeat at the hands of the Scottish Covenanters, sat down to a game of chess with the Marquess of Winchester. As Charles pondered how to play his bishop, Winchester quipped: "See, Sir, how troublesome these Bishops are?" Charles said nothing, but "looked very grim".

Defeat in the second of the two Bishops' Wars – in which a power struggle over the future of the Scottish church led to violent clashes between the king's forces and his opponents in Scotland – was the beginning of the end for Charles I. Having fallen out with his parliaments in the late 1620s, he had embarked on a period of personal rule from 1629 and pursued an ambitious policy of reform in church and state in all three of his kingdoms: England, Scotland and Ireland.

The stalemate of the first Bishops' War finally led him to recall parliament in the spring of 1640, but he dissolved it after only three weeks rather than agree to its demands for reform. Defeat in the second Bishops' War forced Charles to call what became known as the Long Parliament and to negotiate with it.

In October 1641, as Charles worked towards a settlement with the Scots, the Catholics in Ireland decided to launch a rebellion of their own. Disagreement over who should control the army needed to put down the Irish rebellion led ultimately to both parliament and the king raising their own forces and going to war with each other in 1642. Defeat in the ensuing civil wars – there were two – resulted in Charles being tried and executed for treason (a crime that can only be committed *against* kings) in January 1649.

Why did things go so disastrously wrong for Charles? Few would now accept the older characterisation of him as a tyrant whose personal rule was a high road to civil war and revolution. Some even regard the personal rule as a period of constructive and welcome reform in England, arguing that his regime was toppled only as a result of the prior revolts in Scotland and Ireland.

Must revolutions have great, long-term causes? Was Charles's fall an inevitable consequence of his political inheritance? Or was it the result of bad luck and political miscalculation? Do we blame Charles or the situation in which he found himself?

Charles's father, James VI of Scotland, had united the crowns in 1603 when he succeeded Elizabeth to the thrones of England and Ireland as James I. England had its problems – a seriously under-financed crown and deep-seated religious tensions dividing various types of Protestants among themselves (Calvinists and anti-Calvinists, Puritans and anti-Puritans). James now also found himself ruling three kingdoms with different religious complexions: Anglican England, Presbyterian Scotland and Catholic Ireland (albeit that the church establishment in Ireland was Protestant and the Catholic majority were divided ethnically between the native Gaelic and the Old English). Ireland posed further security problems as a Catholic island off the coast of Protestant England that had the tendency to rebel against English rule. During Tyrone's rebellion of the 1590s, which was only finally put down in 1603, the Gaels of Ulster had even offered the crown of Ireland to the king of Catholic Spain.



King James VI and I, seen here in a c1619 portrait, left Charles "a hornets' nest of problems"

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James VI and I is normally seen as a skilful politician who managed this problematic multiple-kingdom inheritance reasonably well. He calmed religious tensions in England, and under his rule Scotland and Ireland were quieter than they had been for a long time.

Yet James stored up a hornets' nest of problems for his son. He had enraged many Scots by reviving episcopacy (a hierarchical structure in which the chief authority over a local church is a bishop) north of the border. It was also James who had first moved to introduce a more Anglican style of worship into the Scottish Kirk, thereby upsetting the Presbyterians. It is true that he took care to work through the general assembly of the Kirk and the Scottish parliament. But he used a considerable amount of bullying and intimidation to force his reforms through and Scottish Presbyterians never accepted the assemblies that had backed James's initiatives as legitimate.

James's solution to the security problem in Ireland was to declare the land of six of the counties of Ulster forfeited to the crown and to plant the province with Protestants from England and Scotland. Both the Scottish Covenanters of the late 1630s and the Irish rebels of 1641 traced the roots of their grievances back to his reign.

Nor did things always go smoothly for James in England. He had disagreements with his parliaments over revenue and foreign policy, and himself ruled without parliament from 1610 to 1621 – the assembly that met for nine weeks in 1614 was deemed not to have been a parliament because it enacted no legislation.

James never solved the problem of an under-financed crown. He encountered severe problems with the Puritans towards the start of his reign, and whatever peace he brought to the church in his middle years

"When **Charles succeeded his father**, James VI and I, in 1625, there was **general rejoicing** everywhere, for 'the **uncertainties of the late rule** had wearied all men'"

seemed to be breaking down by the early 1620s as he turned against the Calvinists for criticising his policy of appeasing Spain following the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618-48) and began to look for support from the anti-Calvinists.

When Charles succeeded his father in 1625, there was general rejoicing everywhere, for "the uncertainties of the late rule had wearied all men". Charles had served his political apprenticeship in the parliaments of 1621 and 1624 where he had emerged as a popular patriot hero for supporting parliament's calls for war against Spain.

This 'Prince bred in Parliaments', however, soon fell out with parliament once king. The main bone of contention was money. Charles felt that, since parliament had pressed for war against Spain, they had an obligation to fund it properly. Yet, as the conflict went badly – and England simultaneously got sucked into hostilities with Catholic France – parliament demanded the impeachment of the king's leading minister, the Duke of Buckingham, before it would vote further taxation. Charles opted to stand by his favourite and tried to raise the money by means of a forced loan.

Politically, this proved a costly move, for it led to parliament's Petition of Right of 1628, condemning arbitrary taxation. However, it was more evidence of an inexperienced king panicking when he found himself at war with Europe's two major powers without adequate financing than of a desire to subvert the constitution.

By 1629, Buckingham had been removed from the scene by an assassin's blade, but still parliament continued to criticise the crown's fiscal and religious policies. When Charles decided to break with parliament that year, he did so because he felt itwas preventing him from fulfilling his divinely ordained duty to rule for the public good.

Having broken with parliament, Charles moved quickly to end the wars with France and Spain, promoted social and economic reforms at home (to help the poor and boost trade and industry), and set about reforming the militia and navy. Compared to what was going on in Europe at the time, during the height of the Thirty Years' War, or the turmoil that England, Scotland and Ireland were to experience during the following decade, the 1630s in England seemed to be a time of relative peace and prosperity.



During his reign, Charles promoted social and economic reforms to help the poor and boost trade and industry

The policies Charles pursued were undoubtedly controversial. He financed the government through a series of fiscal expedients – grants of monopolies, forest fines and distraint of knighthood. He also enforced prerogative levies such as ship money, an emergency measure to supply the navy at times of national danger. However, these were neither illegal nor unprecedented: the king's right to impose ship money was upheld in a test case of 1637-38, and 90 per cent of the returns actually came in, an extraordinary achievement by 17th-century standards. Moreover, extended periods of rule without parliament were neither unconstitutional nor necessarily unwelcome, given that one of parliament's main jobs was to vote taxation.

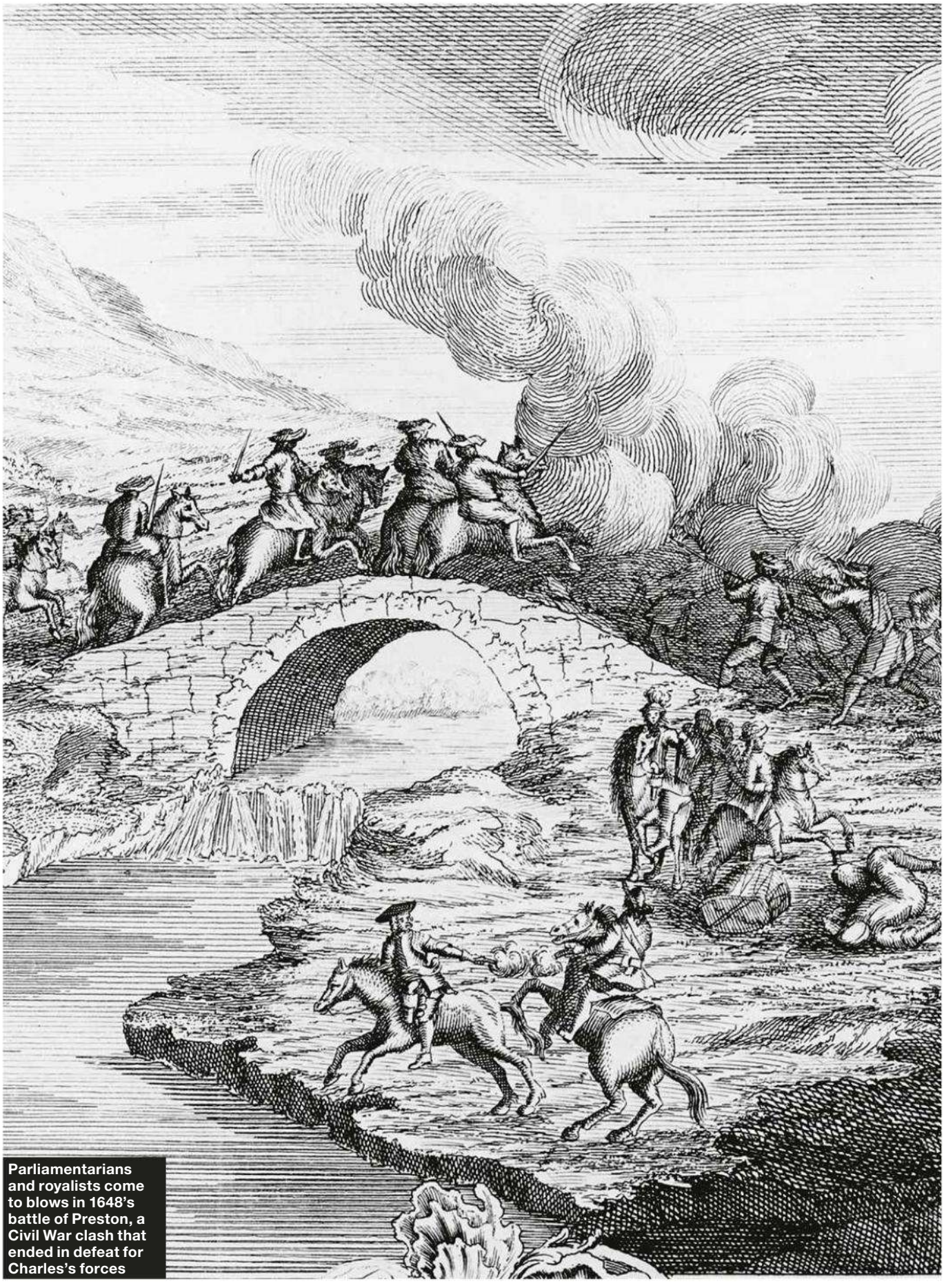
Charles's most controversial policies were, however, reserved for the church. He advanced so-called Arminians (men who challenged Calvinist teachings on predestination and who favoured a more ceremonialist style of religious worship) to all the leading episcopal sees. Under his archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, Charles encouraged the repair and beautification of parish churches, with stained-glass windows and a railed-in altar at the east end – before which parishioners would have to kneel to receive communion – and clamped down on Puritan dissent.

Critics complained that Charles was taking the church back towards Rome. Yet the rise of the Arminians had begun under James, and people had long been predicting that if something were not done to solve the Puritan problem, there would be civil war. And, although many opponents of Laudianism complained of persecution, Charles deprived only about 30 Puritan ministers during his reign. James, by contrast, had deprived about 80 at the beginning of his.

It is true that the prerogative court of Star Chamber meted out brutal punishments – branding, mutilation, heavy fines and perpetual imprisonment – to Puritan critics such as Leighton, Burton, Bastwick and Prynne. These men were, however, extremists, guilty of stirring up sedition against the government. The fact is that less than half a per cent of the population upped sticks and headed to the New World to escape Charles's regime.

This is not to say that Charles's initiatives did not provoke opposition. But his policies had their logic. The king set out to confront problems that needed to be addressed and both his diagnoses and his proposed solutions seemed not unreasonable at the time. All heads of government who embark on a policy of radical reform are bound to ruffle some feathers – James VI and I

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Parliamentarians and royalists come to blows in 1648's battle of Preston, a Civil War clash that ended in defeat for Charles's forces

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certainly did when he was king – but most do not succumb to revolution. Discontent does not mean a regime is bound to fail. The key to politics is managing the level of that discontent.

Why, then, did things fall apart under Charles? The story is a complex one but a number of broader explanations suggest themselves. Charles lacked his father's ability to back down graciously when under pressure. James could inflame tensions with parliament by his overdrawn rhetoric and confrontational style, but he also knew when to retreat. Charles had a tendency to tell his parliaments off when they did not back him.

Charles failed to let others take the blame when things went wrong – a trait we might find admirable today, but which was disastrous in a personal monarchy, when the conventional wisdom was that "if any thing be done, not justifiable, or unfit to be allowed," kings were "to lay the blame upon the minister". James let Attorney General Francis Bacon and Lord Treasurer Middlesex fall in the early 1620s. Charles stuck by Buckingham in 1625-28, even when continuing to back him was clearly counterproductive. When parliament pressed Charles in 1628 to get rid of the Arminian clerics Richard Neile and William Laud, Charles responded by promoting them at the earliest opportunity to the two archiepiscopal sees of York and Canterbury!

Charles created opposition on too many fronts at the same time and his policies had the tendency to unite his critics in a common cause. Not everyone disliked all of his policies, but he ended up upsetting a whole range of people for different reasons – and, crucially, he alienated the middle ground, as well as extremists.

Take the example of ship money. Even those who were willing to support Charles voluntarily resented the legal adjudication that it was a levy the king had the right to collect. Meanwhile, Charles's policy towards the church might have drawn support from some, but particular aspects of his ecclesiastical reforms offended a broad cross-section of the population – moderate as well as radical Puritans, not to mention mainstream Protestants. He even managed to alienate those who didn't hold particularly strong religious beliefs by demanding that

"Charles **failed to let others take the blame** when things went wrong – a trait we might find **admirable today**, but which was **disastrous in a personal monarchy**"



Catholics drive naked Protestants into the countryside in this depiction of the Irish Rebellion of 1641

ALAMY

"It's not so much that the Covenanter **rebellion destabilised** an otherwise well-functioning regime in England. Rather, it **exposed problems** that already existed and **highlighted** just how **fragile the regime** was"

they pay for the refurbishment of parish churches and by attempting to enforce stricter church attendance on the Sabbath (which, ironically, the Puritans would have readily supported).

What made matters worse was the fact that the Laudians were so effective in enforcing their reforms, something only made possible in the first place because they did carry some support in the localities. This tendency to unite in opposition people who were not natural political bedfellows was exacerbated by the fact that Archbishop Laud had his finger in so many pies. He not only oversaw the reforms in the church, but also sat on Star Chamber, was involved in monopolies, and advised Charles on many other policies during the personal rule.

We find examples of people conscripted to fight against the Scots in 1639-40 who in the past had been in trouble with the church courts for immorality. They cannot be thought in any way of being inclined to Puritanism, yet nevertheless identified with the Puritan and Scottish Presbyterian opposition to Laud because they resented conscription.

A similar pattern can be discerned in Scotland and Ireland. Charles upset the Scottish nobility by his Revocation scheme of 1625 (the crown's attempt to recover lands that had been alienated during royal minorities) and by his blatant bullying of the Scottish parliament in 1633. He also enraged the Scottish Presbyterians by trying to foist on them new canons and a more English-style prayer book in 1636-37 without consulting with the general assembly or the Scottish parliament. Even those Scots who did not identify with the Presbyterians resented the way Charles was treating Scotland.

In Ireland, Charles's lord lieutenant, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, made enemies of Catholics and Protestants, Gaels and English alike through his extension of the policy of plantation and the promotion of Laudianism.

Perhaps most seriously, Charles boxed himself into a corner over finance. Having failed to build a working relationship with the English parliament, and without having solved the problem of a structurally under-financed crown, Charles had left himself limited options for raising the money he needed to put down the Scottish revolt. It's not so much that the Covenanter rebellion destabilised an otherwise well-functioning regime in England. Rather, it exposed problems that already existed and highlighted just how fragile the regime was.



Charles I's stubborn support for Archbishop William Laud, shown here in a c1635-37 portrait, enraged many of his subjects

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One final point. It has been suggested that Charles ran into trouble because he failed to see the need to appeal to public opinion or to explain his policies properly to his subjects. In fact, Charles's regime was quite sophisticated in its approach to the politics of spin. The problem was that people in the 1630s did not buy into that spin.

Things changed in 1641-42, when the Long Parliament overplayed its hand. Having addressed what it saw as the abuses of the personal rule, it now began to call for more far-reaching reforms in church and state, including the abolition of episcopacy and radical curtailments to the royal prerogative. Outside parliament, radical Puritans, frustrated by the slow pace of reform, began destroying altar rails and stained-glass windows and disrupting prayer book services.

Charles's response was brilliant: to position himself as a king who stood for the traditional constitution, the rule of law, and the church of bishops and prayer book, against the threat of political and religious extremism. In the process, he succeeded in turning a lot of people against parliament and the Puritans – not everyone, of course, since England became a divided nation, but enough to make it possible for him to contemplate fighting a civil war.

Ironically, the civil wars didn't erupt because Charles was no good at the politics of spin; they erupted because he was. H

Tim Harris is professor of history at Brown University, Rhode Island, USA. His latest book is *Rebellion: Britain's First Stuart Kings* (OUP, 2014)

SELLING OFF THE CROWN JEWELS

With the king executed, parliament needed to raise some funds. **Jerry Brotton** tells the story of the biggest-ever closing-down sale – that of the King Charles I's goods

One of the many characteristics of any political revolution is its desire to dispose of the relics of the defeated regime. Both France in 1789 and Russia in 1918 witnessed the wholesale dismantling and redistribution of the objects and symbols of monarchy, from royal estates to paintings and porcelain and china.

But it is often forgotten that the first historical attempt to seize a royal regime's assets and redistribute them amongst the people happened under the English Commonwealth in the years immediately following the Civil War. Following King Charles I's execution in January 1649, the Rump parliament began passing legislation to sell off what it called "the late king's goods" in the most remarkable act of public redistribution of wealth England had ever seen. The legislation did run into bureaucratic gridlock and suffered from corruption and political opportunism. However, its aspirations only ended with the political Restoration of monarchy in 1660, and King Charles II's subsequent ruthless policy of repossession of royal goods.

Within days of Charles I's execution, the Rump parliament was debating the fate of the dead king's goods. The Commonwealth's political isolation in Europe meant that it needed money to combat military threats from the royalist factions abroad led by the future Charles II. Oliver Cromwell was one of the first to voice concern about precious royal possessions being spirited out of the country and used to fund the royalists. The army was also clamouring for the settlement of salaries and recompense for those who lost loved ones, possessions and jobs during the seven years of civil war. The more ideological members of the new regime were also eager to see the destruction of the fabric of majesty.

King Charles had cultivated the aura of absolutist monarchy by refurbishing the royal palaces and marking his possessions with the royal brand – CR, Carolus Rex. His lavishness also drew the attention of Puritan leaders. Since the 1630s, they had railed against the Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, and her chapel at Somerset House where she practised her religious faith. Many regarded Charles as guilty through association – his art collection also contained hundreds of pictures by Catholic artists – and the Commonwealth saw the opportunity to dispose of many of the more hated symbols of Charles's reign.

Just six months after Charles I's execution, the Rump parliament passed "An Act for sale of the goods and personal estate of the late King, Queen and Prince". The act claimed that the royal family's goods were "justly forfeited by them for their several delinquencies" against the Commonwealth, and that they "shall be inventoried and apprized, and shall also be sold, except such parcels thereof as shall be found necessary to be reserved for the uses of the state". The first £26,500 from the sale would be loaned to the Navy, the rest would go towards those owed money from the royal regime or who had suffered great losses during the wars. A team of pro-republican trustees, contractors and treasurers was appointed to oversee the huge logistical task of inventorying the royal palaces and preparing the goods for public sale.



Charles I commissioned and collected many major works of art – including this portrait by Anthony van Dyck, his court painter from 1632

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Fetching a fair price

By the end of July 1649, teams of trustees were swarming through the royal palaces of Whitehall, St James's, Somerset House,



Once lavishly refurbished by Charles I and his queen, Somerset House became the venue for the sale of their treasures in 1649

Hampton Court and Greenwich, busily inventorying precious royal goods they would never have expected to look on in their lifetime.

Most of the trustees were modest working people – skinners, drapers, tailors, even itinerant poets – who were now asked to put a price on the monarchy. The team that entered the deserted Whitehall Palace inventoried more than a thousand items, everything from the regal and luxurious to the domestic and mundane. Tapestries, carpets, jewels, silver and gold plate, curtains, swords, chairs, cushions, clocks, globes and royal regalia lined with silk and sable were discovered alongside basins, ewers, spoons, fruit dishes, trencher plates, candlesticks, snuffers and chamber pots. The palace's kitchens yielded six brass pots valued at £18, ten brass pans at £14, three dripping pans at 6s (shillings), 18 spits at £2 10s, one large frying pan at 8s, one pair of scales and weights at 10s, three copper pans at £45, and a pair of iron racks at £1 10s. The contents of just one domestic room were valued at £147 15s 6d (6 old pence). Other rooms revealed stranger objects, including "one clock with 12 bells" valued at £100, "three hundred tons of stone" at £150 and "95 pair of stag's horns" at £23 15s. At the other extreme, tapestries were valued at over £4,000, with paintings and statues priced anywhere from £1 to £600.

All across London, palaces were inventoried and goods packed up. It took weeks to complete. The trustees used their professional expertise to evaluate the goods, some of which were laden with regal significance, but most of which were everyday household goods, valued at a few shillings. By the autumn of 1649 everything was ready for a public sale at Somerset House – the queen's former residence. Unfortunately for parliament, the sudden flood of goods combined with scarcity of money, not to mention people's reticence in buying a dead king's goods, meant that business was slow. The sale was also badly handled. One Dutch observer was astonished at the "number of beautiful things", but also complained that it was "all so badly cared for and so dusty that it was a pitiable sight".

For sale, one careful owner

Military veterans and parliamentarians bought at the higher end of the market. They included Colonel John Hutchinson who spent £930 on three paintings by Titian. Considering an MP's average annual income was around £500, this was a staggering investment. Unlike most individuals, who on salaries of £40-50 a year bought household goods for their practical value, buyers like Hutchinson capitalised on inside political knowledge to speculate on the future value of Titians, like today's futures traders. Hutchinson clearly held no religious scruples in buying erotic paintings of semi-clad Venuses and Madonnas, claiming instead he was reclaiming the works for the new republic, as well as swelling its coffers.

However, after nearly a year the sale had only managed to raise £35,000, as public criticism of the lack of financial redistribution grew. Parliament took the decision to hand over royal goods to needy creditors that equalled the debts they claimed against the former royal household. In October 1651, parliament authorised the distribution of goods valued at over £70,000 to consortia, or "dividends" of creditors. Orphans, widows, plumbers and vintners received the king's blankets, chairs and portraits. One creditor near

Everything must go

Charles I was a voracious purchaser of art and had amassed a valuable collection reflecting his royal status. But after his death, it was split up and sold to the highest bidder

Liverpool Street proudly displayed Bernini's bust of the dead king, valued at £400, whilst in Southwark the king's brewer took possession of tapestry and pictures by Van Dyck.

Some took advantage of their good fortune to sell the finest pictures, statues and tapestry to international buyers, including the Spanish and French ambassadors – their purchases provided the basis for the collections now at the Prado and Louvre. Others quietly absorbed the new possessions into the rhythms of their everyday domestic existence. Ultimately, the sale did not achieve its political objectives. When Cromwell wound it down in 1654, around £100,000 had been raised from the sale, but although the Navy and various creditors saw most of this money, parliament had reserved goods for its own use valued at over £50,000.

Charles II inherited these goods when he returned to take the throne and restore the monarchy in 1660. Within months of his return, Charles passed legislation reversing the sale and demanding the return of his dead father's goods. It was a shrewd move, that played on his father's growing martyrdom, and insisted on royal business as usual, but unfortunately the methods used quickly turned into a corrupt witch hunt. The new king's repossession men repeatedly targeted republican sympathisers (including Oliver Cromwell's widow), demanding the return of royal goods they never owned. Even worse, Charles II refused to compensate those who returned goods, even though many were loyal royalists, given royal possessions in lieu of debts incurred by the dead king.

The sale of Charles I's goods and estate was not a misguided act of asset stripping, as many have assumed. It was a bold attempt to redistribute the wealth of a monarch many believed had waged war on his people, which became bogged down in political factionalism and insider trading. Charles II's behaviour in reclaiming the late king's goods was as arrogant and autocratic as many of his father's actions. The only difference was that Charles II was a better judge of the political climate than his father had been. H

Jerry Brotton is Professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary, University of London. His book *The Sale of the Late King's Goods: Charles I and his Art Collection* was published by Macmillan in 2006







▲ Anthony Van Dyck's towering equestrian portrait, Charles I with M de St Antoine

Painted in 1633, the painting took pride of place in St James's Palace Gallery. The trustees valued it at £150, but it did not sell until 1652, when a former royal groom paid the asking price for it. It was sold on to a Flemish painter, who failed to sell it abroad. Charles II's enforcers were told of its whereabouts and returned it to the royal galleries.

◀ Hubert le Sueur's equestrian statue of King Charles I

The statue now stands at the top of Whitehall. Commissioned by the Portland family in 1633, it was sold in 1650 to John Rivett, a brazier from Holborn, who buried it in his garden. Following the Restoration, Rivett was ordered to surrender the statue to the Portland family, who sold it to Charles II for £1,600. It was unveiled in 1675, on the spot where the regicides were executed, looking down Whitehall towards the site of Charles I's execution.

GETTY IMAGES X3 (HERITAGE IMAGES, DE AGOSTINI, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES), ALAMY X2



▲ Tapestries based on Raphael's cartoons, *The Acts of the Apostles*

Henry VIII originally owned the nine-piece set, woven in gold and silk and one of the royal collection's most valuable assets, valued by the trustees at over £4,500. The Spanish ambassador used an English intermediary to beat the price down to £3,500. They were shipped to Spain, but later lost in a fire. The 16th-century tapestries shown above, from the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, give some idea of the magnificence of the lost set.



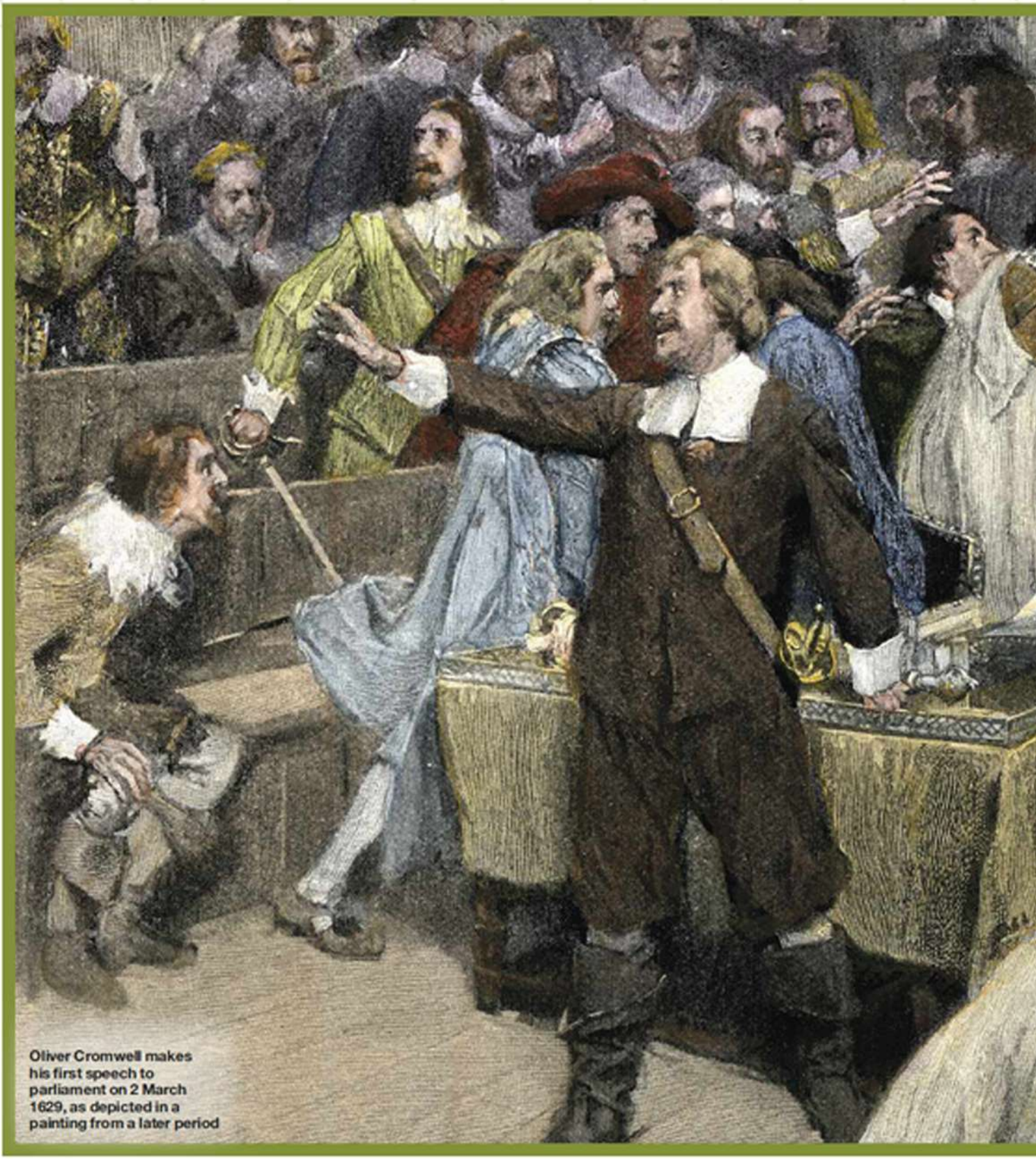
▲ Titian's portrait of Emperor Charles V

The painting was given to Prince Charles by King Philip IV of Spain in 1623. Titian was Charles's favourite painter and he gave the painting pride of place in the gallery at St James's Palace. The king's former adviser Balthazar Gerbier bought the picture for £150 in June 1650 and hung it in his Bethnal Green home. Gerbier acquired the portrait on the orders of the Spanish ambassador, who bought it for £200 and sent it back to Philip IV. It now hangs in the Prado in Madrid.



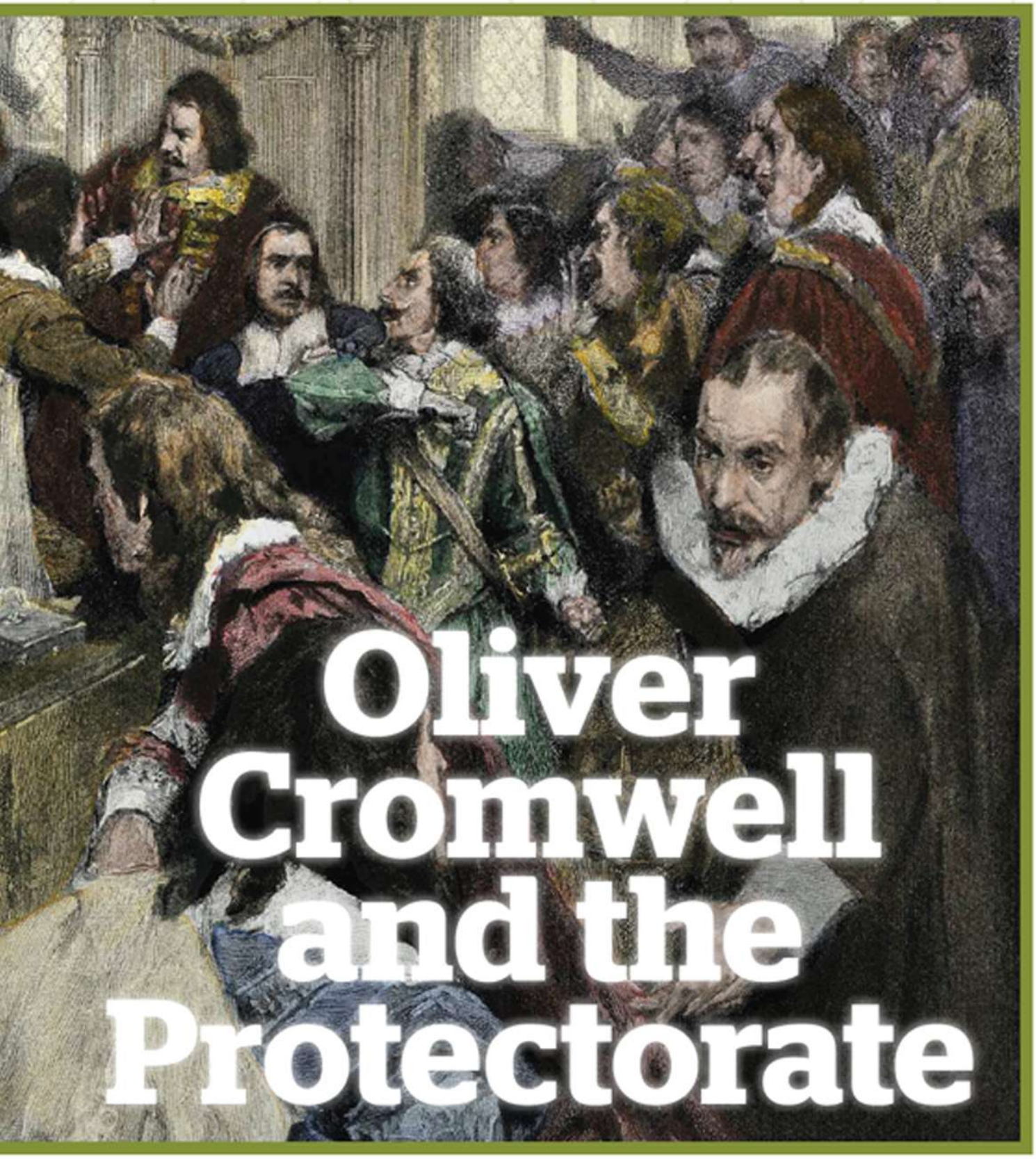
◀ The imperial crown, dating from the Tudor period

Used by Charles I at his coronation in 1625, it is shown here in a 1631 painting by Mytens. Inventoried in the Tower in August 1649, its gold and precious stones were valued at £1,110. Over the next three years, it was dismantled, the gold sent to the Mint and its stones sold; 232 pearls for £320, 56 rubies for £200, 19 sapphires for £198, and 28 diamonds for £191 10s 6d. Charles II's coronation crown had to be redesigned based on drawings of the old regalia at a cost of over £30,000.

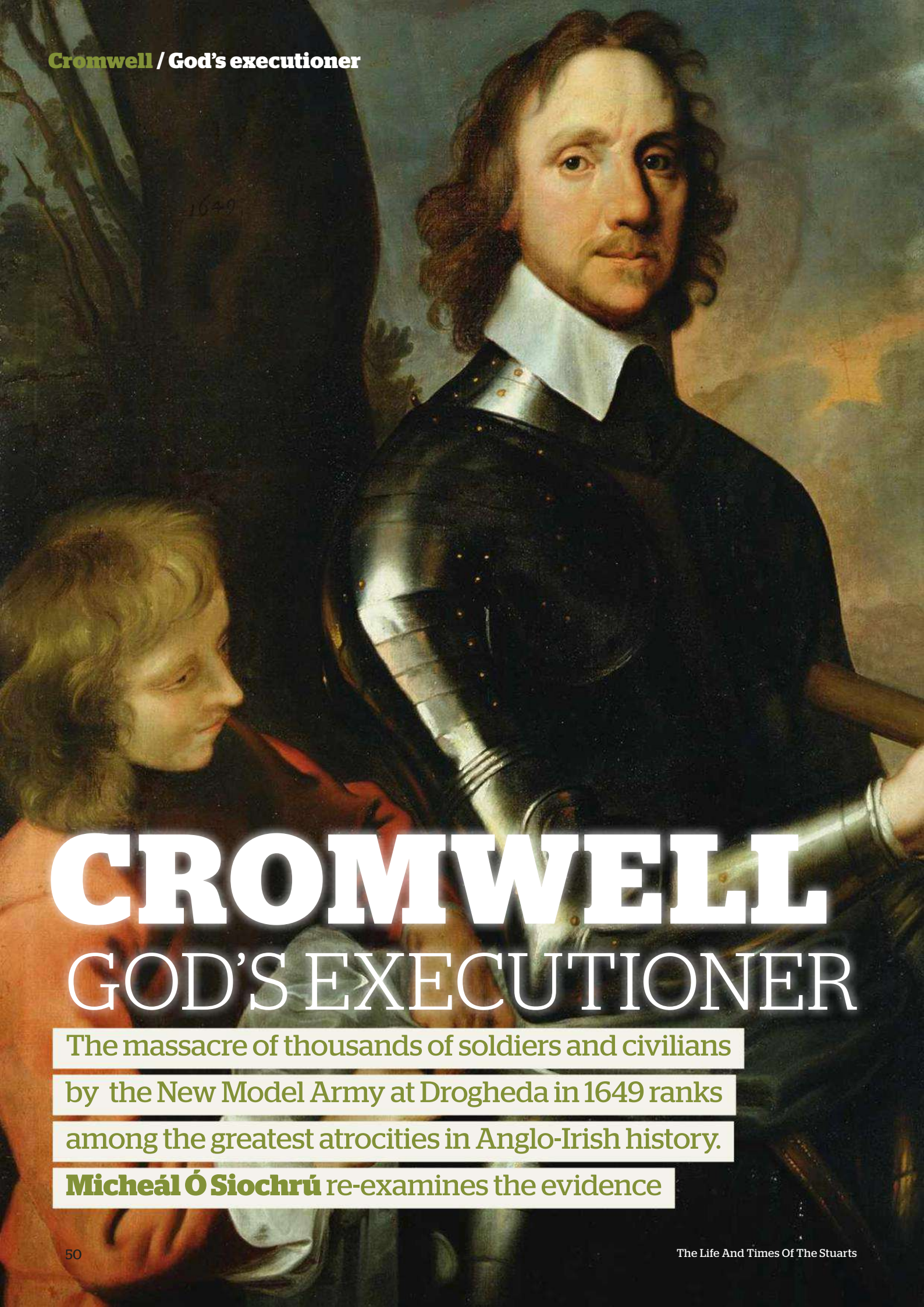


Oliver Cromwell makes his first speech to parliament on 2 March 1629, as depicted in a painting from a later period

NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES/ALAMY



Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate



CROMWELL
GOD'S EXECUTIONER

The massacre of thousands of soldiers and civilians by the New Model Army at Drogheda in 1649 ranks among the greatest atrocities in Anglo-Irish history. **Micheál Ó Siochrú** re-examines the evidence



Robert Walker's portrait of Oliver Cromwell in 1649. Cromwell showed no mercy during his attack on Ireland that year

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

"Cromwell believed that God alone deserved all the glory for a victory obtained through justifiable means"

On 15 August 1649, Oliver Cromwell landed at Ringsend on the outskirts of Dublin, accompanied by 12,000 men of the New Model Army and the largest train of siege artillery yet seen in Ireland. The English Commonwealth regime needed a military victory over the fledgling alliance of English royalists and Irish Catholics to bolster flagging domestic popularity following the execution of Charles I in January. Cromwell marched north and besieged Drogheda, a strategic town at the mouth of the River Boyne, garrisoned by 3,000 troops.

On 10 September, the garrison commander, an English officer named Sir Arthur Aston, rejected a summons to surrender and Cromwell's forces attacked the town the next day. The storming of Drogheda by the New Model Army, and the subsequent massacre of soldiers and civilians, shocked contemporary opinion across Europe and established Oliver Cromwell's reputation for cruelty. And yet, despite the widespread condemnation of his actions, as well as some half-hearted attempts at justification, doubts persist over what exactly happened on that day.

Most historical accounts have relied heavily on secondhand reports or uncorroborated (and highly partisan) evidence, with all the attendant problems of bias. A number of the victorious parliamentary soldiers wrote of their experiences at Drogheda, but few of the surviving defenders recorded their views; unfortunately, with one exception, the town's inhabitants left no diaries or letters describing the tragedy. The following reconstruction is based exclusively on the eyewitness testimony of three men from very different backgrounds – Oliver Cromwell, commander-in-chief of the New Model Army; Garrett Dungan, a soldier in the town's garrison; and Dean Nicholas Bernard, a resident Anglican clergyman – in an attempt to break through the layers of misinterpretation that distort perceptions of one of the most controversial episodes in Irish history.

The key evidence consists of letters composed by Oliver Cromwell, who led his troops through the breach in the town's southern walls. Less than a week later, he wrote to William Lenthall, speaker of the House of Commons at Westminster, describing the day's events in vivid detail. Cromwell conceded that the enemy provided stiff opposition, inflicting "considerable" losses, before they began to retreat in some disorder, with the parliamentarians in hot pursuit. Aston and 300 men occupied a fort called Millmount, on top of a steep hill, but they subsequently surrendered without a fight and were immediately executed. The slaughter continued elsewhere as English soldiers rampaged through the streets and, according to Cromwell, "being in the heat of action, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town". The victims included two clergymen killed the following day in cold blood.

Cromwell believed that God alone deserved all the glory for a victory obtained through harsh but justifiable means. In a reference to the massacre of Protestant settlers by Catholic insurgents at the outbreak of the rebellion in 1641, he claimed that the large numbers slaughtered at Drogheda constituted "a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood".

In fact, the rebels never controlled the town during the 1640s, and the garrison in 1649 contained significant numbers of English royalists and Irish Protestants, as well as Irish Catholics. The Westminster parliament, however, affirmed the invasion of Ireland on the need for vengeance, and Cromwell's severity also set a marker for the campaign of conquest. He expressed the hope that the tactics adopted might discourage further resistance and "prevent the effusion of blood for the future".

Despite the self-congratulatory tone of the letter, Cromwell implicitly conceded that something terrible had happened at Drogheda and that without "the satisfactory grounds to such actions", the scale of the slaughter could not "but work remorse and regret". This sentence, largely ignored by historians, strongly suggests a man ill at ease with his conscience. As always, Cromwell found solace and comfort in his religious convictions, the

unshakeable belief that he was doing God's will. Moreover, in denying quarter to enemy troops, Cromwell acted entirely within the accepted conventions of warfare as understood at the time. Aston had refused a summons to surrender before the attack on Drogheda began, thereby (technically at least) forfeiting the lives of the garrison in the event of a successful assault. Indeed, centuries later, the Duke of Wellington remarked "that it has always been understood that the defenders of a fortress stormed have no claim to quarter".

So why did Cromwell's actions prove to be so controversial? It is important to stress that in the context of an Irish siege during the 17th century, the sheer scale of the killing was unprecedented. Even after the fall of the town, Cromwell did not bother to spare prisoners for ransom or exchange with the enemy. The message seemed to be that they could expect little mercy in what amounted to a war of extermination.

Cromwell's account raises a number of questions, principally relating to the nature and extent of the killings during the assault. His reports are filled with internal contradictions, perhaps understandable given the confusion of battle. In an earlier letter to John Bradshaw, president of the Council of State, Cromwell estimated enemy losses at around 3,000, a figure based both on a captured royalist muster roll, and on his belief that the parliamentarians "put to the sword the whole number of the defendants". He speculated that no more than 30 soldiers, subsequently shipped to Barbados, escaped with their lives. In the letter to Lenthall, however, he listed the casualties as in the region of 2,000 and speculated that up to 1,000 people perished in the vicinity of St Peter's Church, having fled there for safety. Did this 1,000 consist of additional troops, or in the chaos of the assault did civilians also perish?



Cromwell rallies his men during the attack on Drogheda

ALAMY

Uncertainty also surrounds events at Millmount. This imposing fortress would have been difficult to storm and yet it appears as if Aston and the other defenders threw down their weapons after no more than a cursory show of resistance. Why did Aston surrender before obtaining sufficient guarantees that his life and those of his men would be spared?

The decision to kill

A parliamentary newssheet, published in London in early October, provides some insight into Aston's fate. According to *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Axtell went with 12 men to the top of the mount to confer with the garrison commander. They tried to convince him to surrender, but Aston "was very stubborn speaking very big words". Axtell persevered, eventually persuading the defenders to hand over their arms, at which time they were "all slain". A royalist eyewitness agrees with this version of events, but adds another vital piece of information. According to Garrett Dungan, one of the "many men and some officers" who escaped over the north wall of Drogheda, Aston was killed "after quarter given by the officer that came first there", presumably Axtell. It may well be that Axtell simply broke his promise. More likely, the decision to kill these men rested solely with Cromwell.

Such a calculated act of cold-blooded murder, not taken in the heat of action, was not only highly dishonourable but also a clear breach of the contemporary military code. Two years later, in 1651, Henry Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, dealt with a similar case in a very different matter. Ireton summoned a council of war, to examine charges against a Colonel Tothill, accused of executing troops at the siege of Limerick who had surrendered on terms to a junior officer. The colonel argued that he possessed the authority to override a subordinate's actions, but the council disagreed and stripped Tothill of his command. Ireton worried that the punishment "fell short of the justice of God required therein to the acquitting of the army from the guilt of so foul a sin". He notified the royalists of the court martial and released other prisoners without exchange or ransom. This case received extensive coverage in parliamentary newssheets in London and the parallels with the massacre at Drogheda are likely to have troubled Cromwell.

Dungan's tempered account of the storming of Drogheda provides a counterbalance to Cromwell's report. He confirmed Cromwell's responsibility for the massacre, but related that "many were privately saved by officers and soldiers". This suggests that, like Ireton two years later, not everybody in the New Model Army shared their commander's views on how best to deal with the enemy. Intriguingly, Dungan insisted that several of the leading royalist officers, such as Sir Edmund Verney and Colonel John Warren, were still alive 24 hours after the assault. This corresponds with later reports of the execution of these men in the days following the fall of Drogheda, another highly dishonourable act – as according to the continental veteran, Sir James Turner, "in such cases mercy is the more Christian, the more honourable, and the more ordinary way in our wars in Europe".

The real controversy, however, revolves around the issue of civilian deaths. It seems highly unlikely that while storming a town in the face of stiff resistance, 10,000 parliamentary troops would at all times have been able to distinguish between enemy soldiers and civilians. The account of Dean Nicholas Bernard, an ardent royalist and Protestant cleric who had resided in the town throughout the 1640s, confirms this. He described how, "in

> "The scale of the killing was unprecedented. Even after the fall of the town, Cromwell did not bother to spare prisoners for ransom"

the heat of prosecution" immediately following the assault, parliamentary troops shot through the windows of his house, where over 30 Protestants had gathered seeking sanctuary, killing one person and seriously wounding another. The soldiers broke into the building, discharging their weapons, before the timely intervention of an English officer known to the dean restored order.

This passage raises a number of key issues. According to Bernard, the troops fired on civilians sheltering indoors, contrary to claims that the parliamentarians only targeted those in arms. Moreover, the group was only saved from further harm when an officer recognised Bernard and identified his companions as Protestants. The town's Catholic population would not have enjoyed similar protection.

During the 1660s, following the restoration of Charles II, petitions to the court of claims listed a number of people, including Captain Thomas Archer and Robert Hartlepoole, as "slain at Drogheda in his majesty's service". Alongside these military personnel, others, such as James Fleming, were described as "murdered", while Henry Mortimer was killed "being then about 70 years of age".

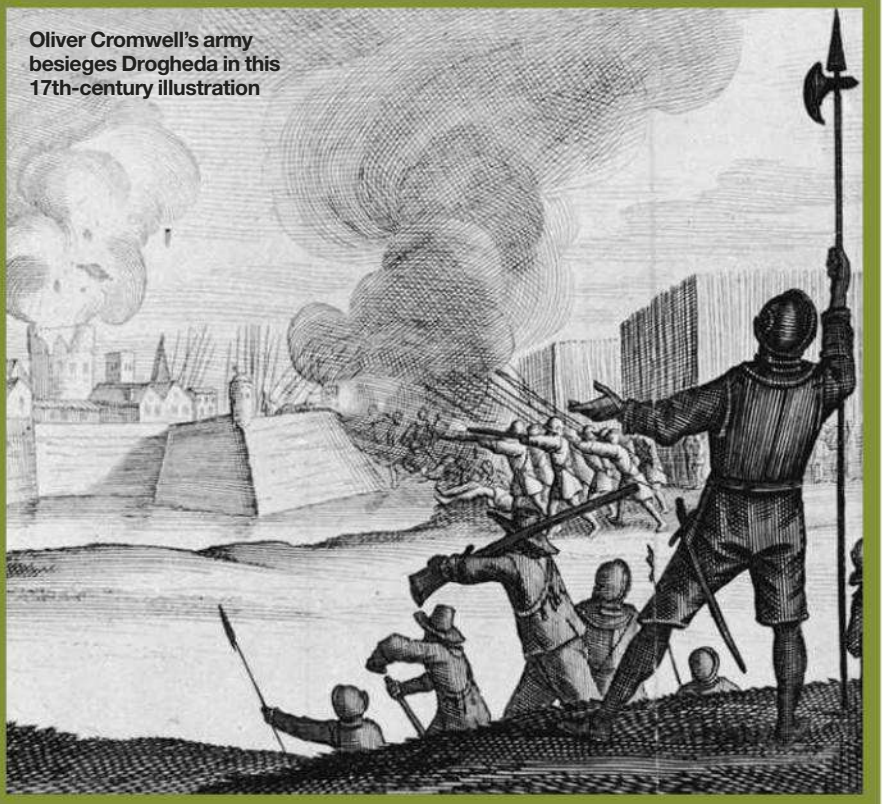
Cromwell similarly distinguished between soldiers and non-combatants in his reports to England. On 27 September 1649, he sent Lenthall an update of developments in Ireland, along with details of enemy losses at Drogheda. In addition to the 3,000 military casualties, the list included the phrase "and many inhabitants". Unfortunately, the original letter does not appear to have survived, but parliament ordered a copy to be published on 2 October. Writing in the mid-19th century, Thomas Carlyle claimed, without any evidence, that the offending phrase must have been added in a later printed compilation, while CH Firth suggested that the printers in 1649 may have tagged the casualty list onto Cromwell's letter, perhaps on parliament's command.

Carlyle's supposition is easy to dismiss, as the original pamphlet from October 1649, complete with the incriminating phrase, still exists. As for Firth's theory, the parliamentary regime in England took a close interest in the world of publishing and passed an act in late September to control output. John Field and Edward Husband, official printers to parliament, risked losing their positions if they tampered with official documents, and Firth never explained why parliament

CROMWELL'S VERDICT ON DROGHEDA

Oliver Cromwell's letter to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, on 17 September 1649

I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood; and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future, which are the satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise cannot but work remorse and regret. The officers and soldiers of this garrison were the flower of all their army, and their great expectation was, that our attempting this place would put fair to ruin us, they being confident of the resolution of their men, and the advantages of the place… And now give me leave to say how it comes to pass that this work is wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts that a great thing should be done, not by power or might, but by the Spirit of God. And is it not so clear? That which caused your men to storm so courageously, it was the Spirit of God, who gave your men courage, and took it away again; and gave the enemy courage, and took it away again; and gave your men courage again, and therewith this happy success. And therefore it is good that God alone have all the glory.



Oliver Cromwell's army besieges Drogheda in this 17th-century illustration

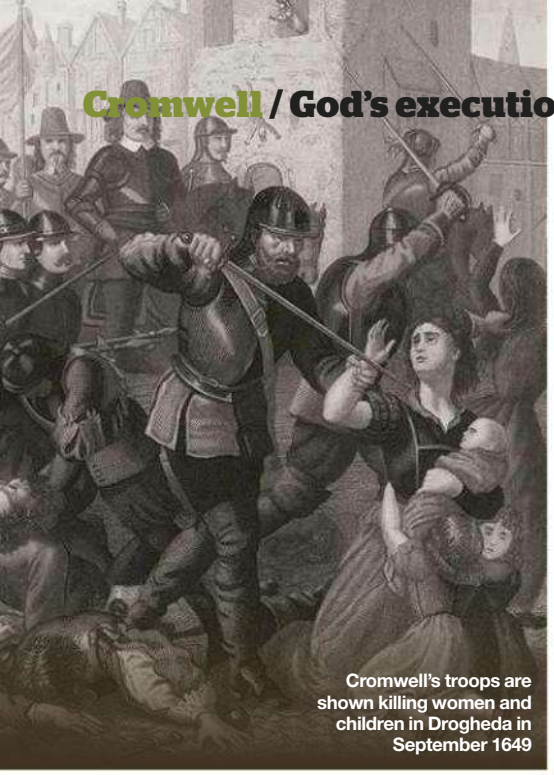
THE CASUALTIES OF DROGHEDA

The casualty list appended to Oliver Cromwell's letter to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, 27 September 1649

A list of the officers and soldiers slain at the storming of Drogheda.

- Sir Arthur Aston, Governor.
- Sir Edmond Verney, Lieutenant Col: to Ormonds Regiment.
- Col: Fleming, of Horse.
- Lieutenant Col: Finglass, of Horse.
- Major Fitzgerald, of Horse.
- Eight Captains, eight Lieutenants, eight Cornets, all of horse.
- Col: Warren, Walls, Byrne, of Foot, with their Lieutenants, majors etc.
- The Lord Taaffs brother, an Augustine Fryer
- Forty-four Captains, and all their Lieutenants, Ensigns, etc.
- Two hundred and twenty Reformado's and Troopers.
- Two thousand five hundred Foot Soldiers, besides Staff-Officers,
- Chyrurgeons etc. and many Inhabitants.

GETTY IMAGES



Cromwell's troops are shown killing women and children in Drogheda in September 1649

might have added something so important to one of Cromwell's letters without his approval. Often, the most straightforward explanation is correct. In his report, Cromwell simply recorded that the casualties included many civilians.

Few today would attempt to excuse Cromwell's actions except perhaps by drawing attention to the bloody and merciless nature of warfare in the early modern period. The Thirty Years' War, which devastated large tracts of central Europe at the same time, remains a byword for wholesale death and destruction. However, this no way explains or justifies Cromwell's shocking tactics.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which Cromwell's views on Ireland mirrored the vast majority of his contemporaries in England, who applauded the crushing of all resistance. As SR Gardiner explained over a century ago, the fact that Cromwell as an Englishman "should have been guilty of the slaughters of Drogheda and Wexford is a matter for regret, not for surprise".

While historians continue to argue over the details, a clear picture of the massacre at Drogheda emerges from the eyewitness accounts of Cromwell, Dungan and Bernard, despite their very different perspectives. Cromwell may well have hoped to discourage further resistance, but in fact his harsh tactics stiffened the resolve of the Catholic Irish to fight on rather than surrender to a man seemingly intent on wholesale carnage. As a result, the war lasted for another four years and created a legacy that would poison Anglo-Irish relations for centuries. H

Micheál Ó Siochrú, associate professor at Trinity College Dublin, is author of *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (Faber, 2009)

CROMWELL'S CAMPAIGN IN IRELAND

30 January 1649
Execution of Charles I at Whitehall

5 February 1649
Charles Stuart, Prince of Wales, is **proclaimed king of England, Scotland and Ireland** by the Scottish covenanters. Days later, the Lord Lieutenant, **James Butler, Marquis of Ormond, follows suit in Ireland**

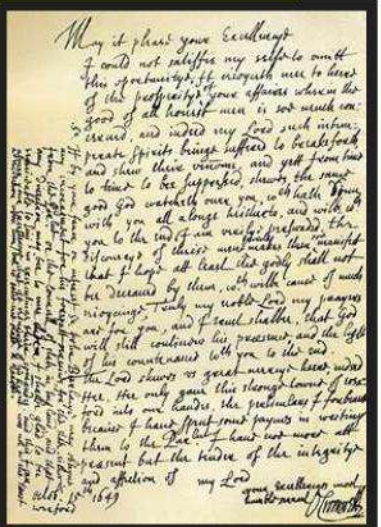
30 March 1649
Oliver Cromwell is approved as commander-in-chief of Ireland. His mission is to reassert English dominance, crush the royalist threat, and avenge the massacre of Protestant settlers in 1641

5 June 1649
Parliamentary army ordered to leave for Ireland and rendezvous at Milford Haven. Cromwell spends the summer meticulously preparing for the invasion

2 August 1649
Colonel Michael Jones, the governor of Dublin, one of the few parliamentary enclaves in Ireland, defeats the Marquis of Ormond at Rathmines on the outskirts of the city, scattering the royalist army and **allowing Cromwell to land unopposed at Ringsend two weeks later**

11 September 1649
Fall of Drogheda to Cromwell

11 October 1649
Fall of Wexford results in **another massacre of soldiers and civilians**, after parliamentary troops scale the town walls while **Cromwell is negotiating surrender terms** with the garrison commander, Colonel David Sinnott



A letter from Oliver Cromwell to Thomas Fairfax announcing the capture of Wexford in Ireland

November – early December 1649
The fort of Duncannon and city of Waterford both successfully withstand parliamentary sieges before Cromwell retires into winter quarters

29 January 1650
Cromwell takes advantage of the unseasonably clement weather to **launch his spring campaign early**, catching the royalists unawares. He captures Fethard, Cahir and Kilkenny in quick succession

17 May 1650
In the last major engagement of his Irish campaign, at Clonmel **Cromwell suffers his biggest setback**, with the New Model Army losing over 2,000 men

26 May 1650
Cromwell departs for England from Youghal, leaving his son-in-law, Henry Ireton, **to complete the conquest of Ireland.** The war drags on until mid-1653

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CROMWELL
HERO OR VILLAIN?

Labelled everything from a towering champion of social justice to a canting hypocrite, Oliver Cromwell has rarely lost his ability to divide opinion since his death. **John Morrill** assesses how history has remembered him

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Oliver Cromwell has never enjoyed a better press than in the past 30 years. Almost all the biographies currently available in bookshops treat him as a man of towering personal integrity. True, he was capable of self-delusion, and indeed was dangerously assured that he was God's chosen instrument, but here was a man who, according to many modern commentators, believed in broad terms in social justice, equality before the law and the accountability of governors to the people. Here was a leader with a more advanced belief in religious liberty (at the very least to "all species of protestant", as he put it) – a liberty that not only meant freedom of worship but equal access to education, the professions and public service.

Cromwell was a military leader who was never defeated, a political leader who took the tough decisions, the man who orchestrated the Regicide in the winter of 1648–9 and, for the last five years of his life, a reluctant head of state serving as lord protector under two different paper constitutions. To many, his greatness is undoubted, notwithstanding the fierceness of his religious faith. Only the Irish, remembering the Drogheda and Wexford massacres, revile him.

Cromwell was also, of course, hailed as a hero and a champion of liberty during his lifetime – not least by the poet and polemicist John Milton, who wrote:

"Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued"

But he was also reviled. Embittered royalists and a significant number of parliamentarians regarded the brutal military putsch that removed most MPs from parliament ['Pride's Purge'] – and which led to the staged trial and execution of Charles I – as a betrayal of all they had fought for. Many Commonwealthsmen shared their enmity, believing that Cromwell's use of military force to dissolve the Rump parliament in April 1653 and his decision to become lord protector within a paper constitution written by his army colleagues, had betrayed the cause he had fought to establish. They were to take their revenge in their memoirs.

Even old army friends changed their minds about him. "I believe firmly that the root and tree of piety are alive in your Lordship, though the leaves thereof, through abundance of temptations and flatteries seem to me to be withered much of late," wrote Colonel Duckenfield, a regional commander and governor of the Isle of Man, to Cromwell in 1655.

> "He became **more recognisable** to more people than all but a **handful of English monarchs"**

If one event symbolises Cromwell's fall from grace, it occurred on 30 January 1661, eight months after Charles II's restoration to the throne, when his corpse was removed from Westminster Abbey, dangled from a gibbet at Tyburn and his head prominently displayed on a spike for everyone to see.

However Royalist invective soon gave way to a damning silence. The Whigs did not seek to rehabilitate him and Tories preferred not to dwell on what could happen to kings.

Short-lived anonymity

As personal memory faded, and death carried away those who could testify from experience (and as the tracts of the 1640s and 1650s, locked away in private libraries, were lost to several generations of writers), Cromwell became less known than at any later period. Yet his anonymity was short-lived. When Britain was once more sucked into major wars in the 1690s, memories of the previous military dictatorship were revived by the systematic publication of the memoirs of many of the men at the heart of that period: Bulstrode Whitelocke (a leading lawyer), Richard Baxter (a 'godly' minister), Denzil Holles (a veteran Presbyterian politician), Edmund Ludlow (a republican army commander), the Earl of Clarendon (who was Charles II's principal adviser in exile and at the Restoration). They were all, with the exception of Ludlow, men who both admired and deplored Cromwell.

Their memoirs set the tone for 18th-century discussions. Gentlemen of letters were unanimous in regarding him as dangerous and fanatical, although the Tories were far more contemptuous of his legacy than the regretful Whigs. While John Hampden and John Pym, leaders of the Long Parliament at the beginning of the Civil War, were the respectable voices against royal and episcopal tyranny, Cromwell was a vicious extremist. As David Hume put it, he was the "most frantic enthusiast… most dangerous of hypocrites… who was enabled after multiplied deceits to cover, under a tempest of passion, all his crooked schemes and profound artifices".

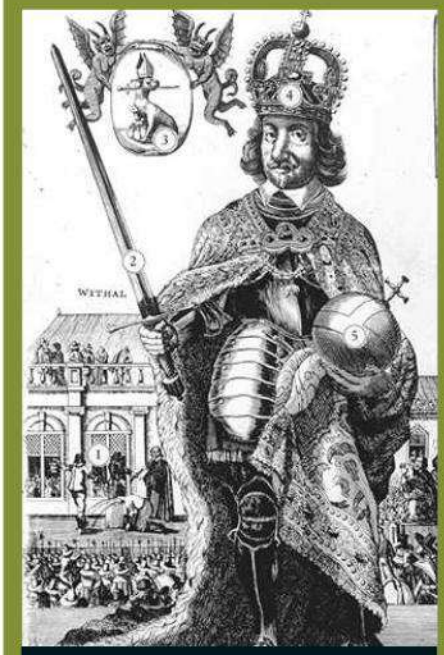
So how did Oliver Cromwell make the long journey from hate figure to the celebrated character in British public memory that he is today? His rehabilitation can be closely linked to the publication of Thomas Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* in October 1845, a text that was to remain continuously in print for exactly 100 years. At a conservative estimate more than 100,000 copies were sold and many of them were handed down from generation to generation.

Carlyle's work is a passionate defence of Cromwell's sincerity, of his faith in God, in his living out his vocation and his mission. And while deficiencies of scholarship and Carlyle's own obtrusive interpolations disfigure his text, it did not dull its impact. Suddenly faced with a Cromwell who had an unreflective belief in spiritual aristocracy and a rough-tongued, cloudily articulated integrity, many Whigs abandoned their conventional distaste. Thousands more thought about Cromwell for the first time. Carlyle's book emboldened the views of Congregationalist historians like John Forster who had earlier taken a more cautious line. Now – in the best available summation of Carlyle's champion – he hailed the new Cromwell as "no hypocrite or actor of plays… no victim of ambition, no seeker after sovereignty or temporal power. That he was a man whose every thought was with the Eternal – a man of a great, robust, massive, mind and an honest, stout, English heart".

Thomas Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* also marked the beginning of a period when Cromwell made an unparalleled transformation into popular culture. He was memorialised not only in print but on canvas, in woodcut and engraving, and in marble and bronze. Visually, he became one of the most familiar of Englishmen, more recognisable to more people than all but a handful of English monarchs or British public figures. The statue by Hamo Thornycroft, bible in one hand, sword in the other, which has stood on Cromwell Green in Westminster since the tercentenary of his birth in 1899, is among the most iconic in the country.

CROMWELL THE VILLAIN, THE HERO, THE SOLDIER... AND THE TANK

Over the years, Oliver Cromwell has been immortalised in numerous different guises



Cromwell as usurper of the British crown



Cromwell as depicted during the Victorian era



A Cromwell tank 'jumps' from a concrete ramp during a demonstration in June 1952



Richard Harris (left) plays the lord protector alongside Alec Guinness in *Cromwell* (1970)

Contemporary portraits have been endlessly reproduced. These generally show Cromwell as a soldier, as a martial man of God, evoking (sympathetically or unsympathetically) his puritanism, either through the characteristic plain style of his collars protruding from his armour or the act of holding a bible. The first statue of him by Noble was erected in Manchester in 1875, followed by three more statues in his tercentenary year at Westminster, Warrington and St Ives. More surprisingly he is memorialised in stained glass, in prominent windows in the Victorian Congregationalist Churches in both Cambridge and Oxford.

Cromwell is also remembered in music. A folk song bearing his name was edited by Benjamin Britten in 1938, while a nursery rhyme, which can be traced back to the late 17th century, begins, "Oliver Cromwell lay buried and dead, hee-haw, buried and dead". Yet the most extraordinary piece is undoubtedly the rendering of a John Cleese prose poem by the Monty Python team in 1989 that tells the life of Cromwell set to the music of a polonaise by Chopin.

Isaac Foot, prominent Liberal politician of the 1920s and 1930s, established in 1935 the Cromwell Association, which has worked effectively to extend knowledge of the lord protector and of his age by erecting memorial plaques on battlefields and other Cromwellian sites, and holding an annual service of thanksgiving by the statue next to the Palace of Westminster. The Association has collected many artefacts associated with the man and these form the basis of the collection held by the Cromwell Museum, which is in the Huntingdon schoolroom he once attended. It is doubtful if any other non-royal Englishman has ever been so diversely commemorated.

Cromwell is also memorialised by name. Winston Churchill could not persuade George V to christen a battleship in his honour in 1915, but he did create the Cromwell tank when he was prime minister. More than 250 roads in Britain are named after Cromwell – no lay person other than Wellington approaches him in this respect.

As you'd expect from one of the most controversial characters in English history, Cromwell has exercised the imaginations of numerous dramatists, novelists and poets. The earliest play bearing his name was produced in 1752 and others followed, including one by Victor Hugo in 1828. He was the anti-hero of Henry William Herbert's *Oliver Cromwell: a Historical Novel* (1838), and he had more than a walk-on part in Captain Marryat's children's classic *Children of the New Forest* (1847). For the most part, he is portrayed as a grim, self-righteous puritan, a literary equivalent of William Frederick Yeames's painting *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, which shows parliamentarian soldiers quizzing a young boy about the whereabouts of his Royalist father.

Cromwell is just as prominent in film and TV. His appearances on the silver screen include the Hammer Horror *Witchfinder General* (1968) and *Cromwell* (1970), which improbably cast the Irish tearaway-actor Richard Harris as the hero. TV dramas in which he figures include John Hopkins's *Cruel Necessity* (1962) and the 1970s serialisation of *Children of the New Forest*.

Cromwell remains a deeply contentious figure. Yet when in 1999 Radio 4 ran a phone-in to find the greatest Briton of the second millennium, he came third. And this was no flash in the pan, for when BBC TV ran a similar contest in 2002, he made the top ten. More than 150 biographies of Cromwell have been published over the past 150 years, the overwhelming majority of them favourable. So it would appear that his own words, pleading for liberty, have in the end proved more influential than the testimony of his contemporaries that he was a canting hypocrite. But, history being history, the tide is bound to turn... H

John Morrill is professor of British and Irish history at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Selwyn College. He is author of *Oliver Cromwell* (OUP, 2007)

TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY

NO CHRISTMAS UNDER CROMWELL

Mark Stoyle investigates popular resistance to the Puritan assault on Christmas during the 1640s and 1650s

As the year 1645 limped towards its weary close, a war-torn England shivered beneath a thick blanket of snow. A few months earlier, parliament's New Model Army, led by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell, had routed the forces of Charles I at the battle of Naseby. Although that defeat had struck the king's cause a mortal blow, the royalists refused to surrender, and the bloody Civil War continued to rage.

Few Englishmen and women can have been anticipating a particularly merry Christmas. Yet, for those who lived in the extensive territories which were controlled by the king's enemies, there was to be no Christmas this year at all – because the traditional festivities had been abolished by order of the two houses of parliament.

From Charles's beleaguered wartime capital in Oxford, the royalist satirist John Taylor – by now in his mid-60s, but still one of the king's most indefatigable literary champions – issued a cry of anguish at this assault on England's time-honoured customs. All of the "harmless sports" with which people had long celebrated Christ's nativity "are now extinct and put out of use… as if they had never been," Taylor lamented in his pamphlet *The Complaint of Christmas*, and "thus are the merry lords of misrule suppressed by the mad lords of bad rule at Westminster".

"Thus are the **merry lords of misrule** suppressed by the mad **lords of bad rule** at Westminster"

The attack on the feast of Christmas had deep roots. Long before the Civil War began, many Puritans had been troubled both by the boisterous nature of the festivities which took place at Christmas and by the perceived association of those festivities with the old Catholic faith. During the early 1600s, most English Puritans had been prepared to tolerate Christmas. Following the rebellion of the Presbyterian Scots against Charles I in 1637, however, all this was to change.

The Scottish Kirk, which was itself fiercely Protestant, had abolished Christmas as long ago as the 1560s and, although James I had managed tentatively to restore the feast in his northern kingdom in 1617, it was banned there once again after his son's defeat by the Scots in 1640. From this time onwards, attitudes towards Christmas among English Puritans began to harden. And as political tensions in parliament rose during 1641, so a handful of Puritan extremists took it upon themselves to abandon the celebration of Christmas.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, THINKSTOCK



A 14th-century stained glass window in All Saints church, York, showing the nativity. By the 17th century, Puritans were equating Christmas with "drunkenness and other villainies"



People rejoice that 'old Christmas Day' is brought back with Charles II in 1660

Following the outbreak of full-scale Civil War between king and parliament in 1642, John Taylor became one of the first to allude in print to the radicals' decision to dump Christmas. In a satirical pamphlet published in January 1643, Taylor provided his readers with *A Tub Lecture*, which, he claimed, had been preached by a godly joiner to a group of Puritans at Watford "on the 25 of December last, being Christmas day". In this fictitious address, the 'lecturer' is shown assuring his audience that they should not "conceive of me to be so superstitious, as to make any conscience of… this day, because the Church hath ordained [it]" to be a holy feast. "No, God forbid I should be so profane," he continues, "rather it is a detestation of their blindness that have brought me hither this day, to enlighten you… [and] I give you to understand that the very name of Christmas is idolatrous and profane, and so, verily, are the whole 12 days [of Christmas] wherein the wicked make daily… sacrifices to riot and sensuality".

Seizing the initiative

One of the clauses of the 'Solemn League and Covenant' which parliament signed with the Scots in September 1643 stated that, in exchange for Scottish military assistance against the king, MPs would ensure that further "reformation" of the Church of England took place. As Ronald Hutton has observed, this clause encouraged religious radicals on the ground to seize the initiative and to attack those aspects of the traditional ecclesiastical calendar which they disliked. Three months later, a number of Puritan tradesmen in London opened up their shops for business on 25 December in order to show that they regarded this day as no different from any other, while several London ministers kept their church doors firmly shut. Meanwhile, many MPs turned up to sit in the parliament house, thus making their own disdain for the customary Christmas holiday very clear.


The Vindication of
CHRISTMAS,
OR,
His Twelve Yeares Observations upon the Times, concerning the lamentable Game called Sweep-stake; acted by General *Plunder*, and Major General *Tax*; With his Exhortation to the people; a description of that oppressing Ringworm called *Excise*; and the manner how our high and mighty Christmas-Ale that formerly would knock down *Hercules*, & trip up the heels of a Giant, strook into a deep Consumption with a blow from *Westminster*.
Keep out, you come not here,
Sir, I bring good cheere.
Old Christmas welcome; Do not fear.
Imprinted at London for G. Horton, 1653.

During the following year, moreover – when Christmas Day happened to coincide with one of the monthly fast days upon which parliament's supporters were enjoined to pray for the success of their cause – MPs ordered, not only that the fast day should be "observed" instead of the traditional feast, but also that the fast should be kept "with the more solemn humiliation, because it may call to remembrance our sins, and the sins of our forefathers, who have turned this feast, pretending [to] the memory of Christ, into an extreme forgetfulness of him, by giving liberty to carnal and sensual delights".

In January 1645 the final nail was hammered into Christmas's coffin, when parliament issued its new *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, a radical alternative to the established Book of Common Prayer, which made no reference to Christmas. Thus the way was paved for the 'anti-Christmas' of 1645 – a day upon which, in Taylor's words, a man might pass through the parliamentary quarters, and "perceive no sign or token of any holy day".

The parliamentarians had abolished the high point of the English ritual year, and the cancellation of Christmas aroused huge popular resentment – not just in the royalist camp, but in the districts controlled by parliament, too. As early as December 1643, the apprentice boys of London rose up in violent protest against the shop-keepers who had opened on Christmas Day, and, in the words of a delighted royalist, "forced these money-changers to shut up their shops again".

There were further dark mutterings next year. On 24 December 1644, the editor of a pro-parliamentarian news-pamphlet expressed his support for the MPs' decision to favour the monthly fast over the traditional feast, but admitted that "the parliament is cried out on" by the common people as a result, with incredulous shouts of "What, not keep Christmas? Here's a Reformation indeed!"

Many ordinary Londoners continued to show a dogged determination to keep Christmas special during the following year, and John Taylor's decision to rush into print at this time with his *Complaint of Christmas* – a work which bore the same title as a pamphlet urging the enthusiastic observance of the mid-winter

"In the closing verse of a ballad, a **gloomy royalist writer** remarked 'To conclude, I'll tell you news that's right, **Christmas was killed at Naseby fight**'"

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

feast, which he had published as long ago as 1631 – was clearly motivated by a desire to stir up popular resentment as well as to turn a quick profit for its poverty-stricken author.

How far Taylor succeeded in these aims it is impossible to say, but his satire quickly provoked a parliamentarian counter-satire entitled *The Arraignment, Conviction and Imprisoning of Christmas*. Published in January 1646, this publication took great pleasure in conflating Taylor himself with the symbolic character of 'old Christmas Day' whose persona the royalist writer had assumed in his own previous pamphlets. In one passage, Taylor/'old Christmas Day' – here described as "an old, old, very old grey-bearded gentleman" – is portrayed sitting dejectedly in the midst of the king's shrinking territories, while desperately urging "all you that ever think to see Christmas again, stick to me now close!"

Any lingering hopes on the part of the royalists that popular anger at the abolition of Christmas might somehow transform their military fortunes were soon to be dispelled. During early 1646, Charles I's remaining field forces melted away almost as fast as the winter snow and by April the game was clearly up for the king. In the closing verse of a contemporary ballad, a gloomy royalist writer suggested that the collapse of the king's cause had sealed the fate of Christmas itself, remarking: "To conclude, I'll tell you news that's right, Christmas was killed at Naseby fight."

Yet so strong was the popular attachment to the old festivities that during the postwar period a number of pro-Christmas riots occurred. In December 1646, for example, a group of young men at Bury St Edmunds threatened local tradesmen who had dared to open their shops on Christmas Day, and were only dispersed by the town magistrates after a bloody scuffle.

Pro-Christmas riots

On 10 June 1647, parliament passed an ordinance which declared the celebration of Christmas to be a punishable offence. On Christmas Day that year there was further trouble at Bury and more riots at Norwich and Ipswich. In London, a crowd of apprentices assembled at Cornhill on Christmas Day, and there "in despite of authority, they set up Holly and Ivy" on the pinnacles of the public water conduit. When the lord mayor despatched some officers "to pull down these gawds," the apprentices resisted them, forcing the mayor to rush to the scene with a party of soldiers and to break up the demonstration.

The worst disturbances of all took place at Canterbury where a crowd of protestors first smashed up the shops which had been opened on Christmas Day and then went on to seize control of the entire city. This riot helped to pave the way for a major insurrection in Kent in 1648 that itself formed part of the 'Second Civil War' – a scattered series of risings against the parliament and in favour of the king, which Fairfax and Cromwell only managed to suppress with great difficulty.

Following parliament's victory in the Second Civil War and the execution of Charles I in 1649, demonstrations in favour of Christmas became less common. There can be no doubt that many people continued to celebrate Christmas in private, and in his pamphlet *The Vindication of Christmas* (1652), the tireless John Taylor provided a lively portrait of how, he claimed, the old Christmas festivities were still being kept up by the farmers of Devon.

Following Cromwell's installation as lord protector in 1653, the celebration of Christmas continued to be proscribed. While not personally responsible for 'cancelling Christmas', it is evident that Cromwell was behind the ban, transacting government business on 25 December as if it were a day just like any other.

Only with the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was 'old Christmas Day' finally brought back in from the cold, to widespread popular joy. H

Mark Stoyle is professor of early modern history at the University of Southampton

WHAT WAS CHRISTMAS LIKE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR?

During the early 1600s, Christmas was celebrated in many ways, just as it is today. Among the most widely observed customs were...

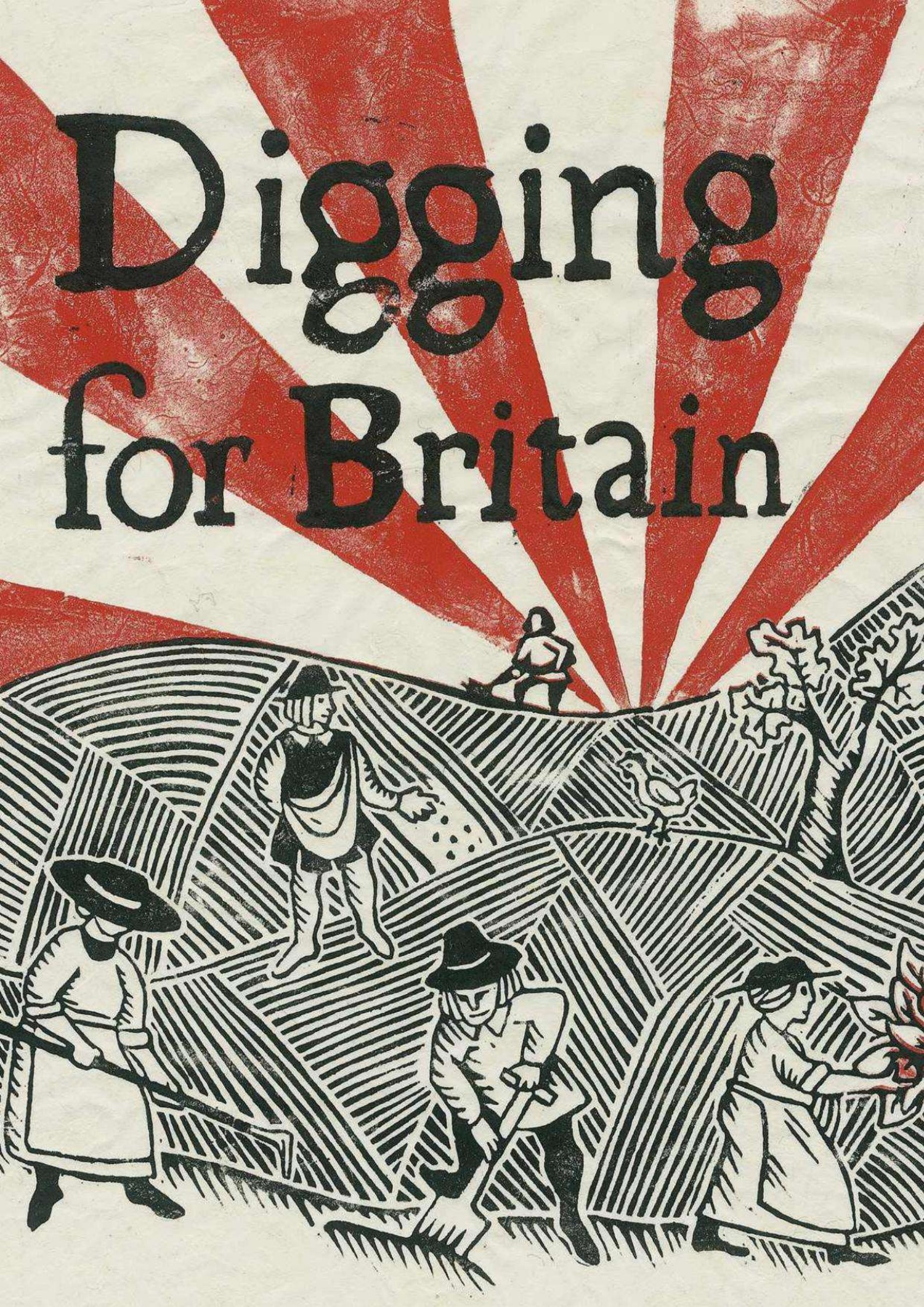
- Decorating houses, churches and other public buildings with boughs of holly, ivy, rosemary and bay
- Taking Christmas Day off work. Many people went further than this and took the next 11 days off as well, thus observing the traditional '12 days of Christmas'
- Attending a church service
- Singing carols, dancing to music and playing a wide variety of games
- Feasting on all sorts of rich food, including roast beef, brawn, Christmas pies and 'plum pottage' (this was a kind of porridge or spiced broth, which was the forerunner of today's Christmas puddings)
- Imbibing plenty of alcoholic drinks, including 'lambs-wool', a mixture of ale, roasted apple, sugar and spice
- In certain aristocratic households, electing a 'Lord of Misrule'. This was a person of relatively humble status, who was first declared Lord of Misrule and then – to mark the fact that the world had been temporarily 'turned upside down' for the holiday period – licensed to lead the merry-making throughout the 12 days of Christmas
- Presenting friends and relatives with gifts on New Year's Day



An illustration shows the Lord of Misrule leading villagers in a festive procession in c1600

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Digging for Britain





Community spirit: Our modern illustration shows Gerrard Winstanley's radical group, the Diggers, cultivating crops on common land in Surrey

BECCA THORNE

Edward Vallance reviews the career of the man who led the 'Digger' movement in the 17th century, Gerrard Winstanley, and considers how historians today are finding a new way to look at this celebrated radical

His name has been inscribed on a column commemorating revolutionary heroes in Alexander Garden, Moscow; his life has been celebrated in historical fiction, on film and stage, and in song; and his writings inspired 21st century political and ecological activists, from Tony Benn to George Monbiot. Yet this celebrated revolutionary is not Karl Marx or even Friedrich Engels, but a 17th-century Englishman, the 'Digger' Gerrard Winstanley.

Winstanley is best known for the two communes that he and his 'Digger' followers established in Surrey in 1649, settlements that reflected his core political belief that the land, a "common treasury", belonged to all. The 400th anniversary of Winstanley's birth in 2009 was accompanied by celebratory festivals in Cobham, Surrey where he lived during the critical years of the Civil Wars, commemorative lectures and the publication of a full, edited edition of his works by Oxford University Press.

But, until recently, much of Winstanley's biography was shrouded in mystery and it was often assumed, wrongly as it turns out, that the Digger communes began as a response to personal impoverishment. Thanks to the research of the historians JD Alsop and John Gurney, however, we now know a great deal more about Winstanley's early life.

While it is true that Winstanley, then a London textile merchant, was forced to declare for bankruptcy in 1643, this relatively well-connected Londoner was never truly impoverished. By the mid-1640s, he had moved to Cobham, Surrey, perhaps because his father-in-law, the leading London surgeon William King, owned property there. Here Winstanley worked as a grazier and though he was not one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the town, he was still listed as a 'gentleman' on manorial records.

The communal settlements he founded in April 1649 were not, then, purely prompted by material considerations. Indeed, Winstanley continued to retain his home in Cobham at the same time as he was farming the common land and erecting temporary dwellings upon it. More to the point, by this stage he was well-known as a mystical writer, penning four works on religious themes in 1648.

These pamphlets revealed an individual whose spiritual views were deeply heterodox, even in the context of the Civil

"Winstanley was forced to **declare bankruptcy** in 1643, but was **never truly impoverished**"

WINSTANLEY'S RADICAL PEERS

Other groups that challenged the establishment



Colonel John Lilburne, leader of the Levellers, reading the Bible

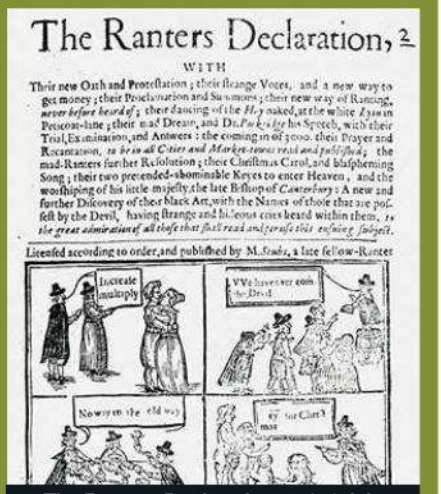
The Levellers

Like Winstanley's Diggers, the Levellers advocated radical political change, calling for a written constitution incorporating inalienable civil rights, equality before the law and a more democratic electoral system. However, unlike the Diggers, the leading Leveller writers – John Lilburne, Richard Overton – William Walwyn and John Wildman, disavowed any intent to threaten private property.

Winstanley's alternative name for his followers, 'True Levellers', demonstrated both their commitment to the abolition of the private ownership of land and to make clear their rejection of using force to achieve their goals. This was an important distinction to make given the harsh response to Leveller-inspired army mutinies in May 1649.

The Ranters

Historians remain divided as to whether this sect of libertine radicals really existed. The tabloid press of the day, though, was convinced that England's morals were under assault from drinking, swearing, fornicating 'Ranters' such as Abiezer Coppe and Laurence Clarkson. For Winstanley too, the threat posed by the Ranters was very real. Through his associate, William Everard, Winstanley had connections to John Pordage, a radical mystic often accused of Ranterism. The Diggers' communal settlements also generated accusations that they advocated free love. These slurs help explain the defence of the traditional, patriarchal family found in Winstanley's *Law of Freedom*.



The Ranters Declaration

WITH

Their new Oath and Protestation; their strange Votes, and a new way to get money; their Proclamation and Summons; their new way of Ranting, never before heard of; their dancing of the Hay naked, at the white Lyon in Petticoat-lane; their mad Dream, and Dr. Pordage his Speech, with their Trial, Examination, and Answers: the coming in of 3000. their Prayer and Recantation, to be in all Cities and Market-towns read and published; the mad-Rangers further Resolution; their Christmas Carol, and blaspheming Song; their two pretended-abominable Keyes to enter Heaven, and the worshiping of his little majesty, the late Bishop of Canterbury: A new and further Discovery of their black Art, with the Names of those that are possest by the Devil, having strange and hideous cries heard within them, to the great admiration of all those that shall read and peruse this ensuing subject.

Licensed according to order, and published by M. Stubs, a late fellow-Ranter

The Ranters Declaration, c1650: it is unclear whether this radical sect existed



A print showing a Quaker meeting in the 18th century

The Quakers (Society of Friends)

Winstanley was buried as a Quaker and had clearly become an active figure among London Friends before he died. There are also references to a Winstanley being involved with the group in the 1650s and there are similarities between early Quaker beliefs and Winstanley's ideas – an emphasis upon the spirit over the word; a rejection of a state church and tithe-supported clergy; and a deep concern for social justice. The early Quakers were arguably, though, more anti-authoritarian than Winstanley, promoting their message by acts of civil disobedience or 'social testimony'.

War, a time of unprecedented religious experimentation born of de facto toleration and freedom of the press. Like many other religious radicals, Winstanley fervently believed in the imminent second coming of Christ. But he went much further, not only attacking the traditional church hierarchy but also rejecting the idea of an external heaven and hell. He denied the orthodox accounts of the resurrection of Christ and the Fall of Man while endorsing the universalist heresy which held that all would ultimately be saved.

Winstanley's radical spiritual ideas were expressed in a language which repeatedly combined the religious with the rustic. The Fall had not only cursed man but also the earth, causing it "to bring forth poisonous vipers, toads and serpents, thorns and briars". And there were already profoundly political elements to Winstanley's religious vision. The Fall itself was depicted as a divine response to a human act of covetousness – the taking of an apple. Covetousness, for Winstanley, was the root of evil, the spirit of oppression that he already pointedly associated with 'kingly' power. In his pamphlet *Truth Lifting Up Its Head Above Scandals* (1648), the political lesson was clear: "Lands and Kingdoms are most commonly governed more by the wisdom of the flesh, than of the spirit."

Early in 1649, Winstanley's millenarian vision of a new heaven and earth became overtly politicised, though the catalyst was itself an ecstatic religious experience. In his pamphlet *The New Law of Righteousness*, Winstanley reported that, while in a trance, he had heard a voice tell him, "worke together. Eat bread together." The substance of the vision was that the common land was to be farmed by the poor, who would withdraw their labour from the land-owning classes. But, at this stage, Winstanley did not see the New Jerusalem as being created by human efforts alone. Instead, the rising spirit of Christ within all – which for Winstanley was the millennium – would ensure that the people were "all of one heart and one mind".

But by the time that Winstanley published his next work in April 1649 – the Diggers' first manifesto, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* – this position too had changed. On 1 April, Winstanley, along with several others – including his associate William Everard, a volatile former New Model Army soldier now turned prophet – began to dig the common land on St George's Hill, Walton, Surrey in preparation for cultivating crops there.

GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

In *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, Winstanley defended this action as authorised by parliament's war to defend English liberty. There could be no freedom until "the poor that have no land have a free allowance to dig and labour the commons".

The poor themselves now clearly had a significant role to play in achieving their liberation from their landlords. Winstanley effectively urged a strike of all agricultural labourers to bring an end to private ownership of the land. "The old world" was, he declared, "running up like parchment in the fire and wearing away."

Though *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* disavowed the use of violence – "we shall not do this by force of arms, we abhor it" – anger at the landowning classes was much more evident here than it had been in earlier works.

This hostility was a reflection of the fierce opposition that the Diggers faced in Walton, but it was also something of a rhetorical ploy on Winstanley's part. In fact, many of their opponents came from the same social background as the Diggers themselves. The Diggers' settlement, after all, infringed upon the rights of other inhabitants to make full use of the commons. Disputes within the community had got so bad that on 16 April some residents made a formal complaint to the executive body of the English republic, the Council of State. Four days later, Winstanley and Everard were summoned to Whitehall to be interviewed by Lord General Fairfax.

Fairfax treated them with leniency, even permitting them to keep their hats on in his presence. But despite Fairfax then making a personal visit to the commune, at which Winstanley repeated assurances that the Diggers were non-violent, the attacks upon the settlement at St George's Hill continued. By July, the Diggers had been forced to move to new land at Little Heath, Cobham.

Initially, they met with a warmer reception here than at Walton. This was partly because many of the Diggers themselves originated from Cobham, and partly because the parish was more socially divided between the local gentry and yeomanry. By the end of November, however, local gentlemen, including Parson John Platt, were pressing the Council of State once again to deal with the Diggers. On the 28th of that month, local soldiers tore down some of the Diggers' dwellings, took away firewood and cast three or four elderly squatters out into the open. By the spring of 1650, the community at Cobham had been destroyed as Platt and 50 other men set fire to Diggers' shelters on the common and set watch – both day and night – to ensure they did not return.

"The Diggers' cultivation of land was seen as a **legitimate defence** of English liberty"

The communal experiment was over and Winstanley now returned to writing, publishing his last and best-known work, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, in 1652. In it, Winstanley laid out a vision of his ideal society. The land would be held in common and the goods produced kept in storehouses that families could draw from according to need – though individual families would continue to live apart rather than in communal dwellings.

For some historians, *The Law of Freedom* represents the darkening of Winstanley's utopian dreams. Instead of placing faith in the spirit of Christ rising in all to create a free society, the Digger leader now seemed to believe that only a strong coercive system would ensure that all worked the land for the common good. Overseers were given the power to enslave those who refused to help farm the land. The death sentence was assigned for lawyers, merchants and clergy who sought profit for their activities.

A democratic future

However, before we turn Winstanley into a sort of 17th-century Pol Pot, the system of justice in *The Law of Freedom* needs to be placed in the context of the generally brutal punishments meted out by the contemporary legal system. Winstanley's penal code significantly reduced the number of crimes that were deemed capital offences. More importantly, whatever its repressive aspects, *The Law of Freedom* continued to map out a broadly democratic future for the nation. Under Winstanley's constitution, there were to be regular elections and office-holding was limited to specific terms to check corruption. Crucially, membership of Winstanley's utopia was voluntary. Those who wished to cling on to the 'Old World' of buying and selling could do so.

Winstanley's book generated a limited response and he now retired from writing, but not, strikingly, from public life. By the late 1650s, Winstanley, once a pariah, had become a respectable figure in the parish of Cobham, serving as a church warden and then later as one of the high constables for Elmbridge. Towards the end of his life, Winstanley was living in some comfort in a large house in Bloomsbury.

This apparent about face, from republican radical to pillar of the community, was less dramatic than it may at first seem. Throughout his works, Winstanley had shown considerable deference to authority – *The Law of Freedom* was dedicated to Cromwell – so his readiness to work with government, both local and national, was no betrayal of his earlier ideals.

And though in later years Winstanley had sunk into comfortable obscurity, through his writings his message lived on. There were resonances with Winstanley's ideals in the 18th-century radical Thomas Spence's arguments, in the Chartists' 'Land Plan' and, in an American context, in the work of Henry George.

By the late 19th century, the radical Scottish journalist Morrison Davidson was enthusiastically telling anarchists, syndicalists and communists about "our 17th-century Tolstoy", Gerrard Winstanley. That literary allusion remains a powerful one.

Though descriptions of Winstanley as a proto-communist may have fallen out of fashion, as has the Marxist and socialist historiography which revived interest in him, attention to Winstanley the writer has never been greater. It is no coincidence that two of the three editors of the 2009 scholarly edition of Winstanley's works, Thomas Corns and David Loewenstein, are experts in the field of English literature rather than history. With the exception of Winstanley's contemporary, the poet Andrew Marvell, there has perhaps been no finer writer in the English language for fusing the pastoral with the political. The forthcoming publication of a new paperback edition of *The Law of Freedom* will allow even more people to appreciate the beauty of his prose, even if they might not share his radical politics.

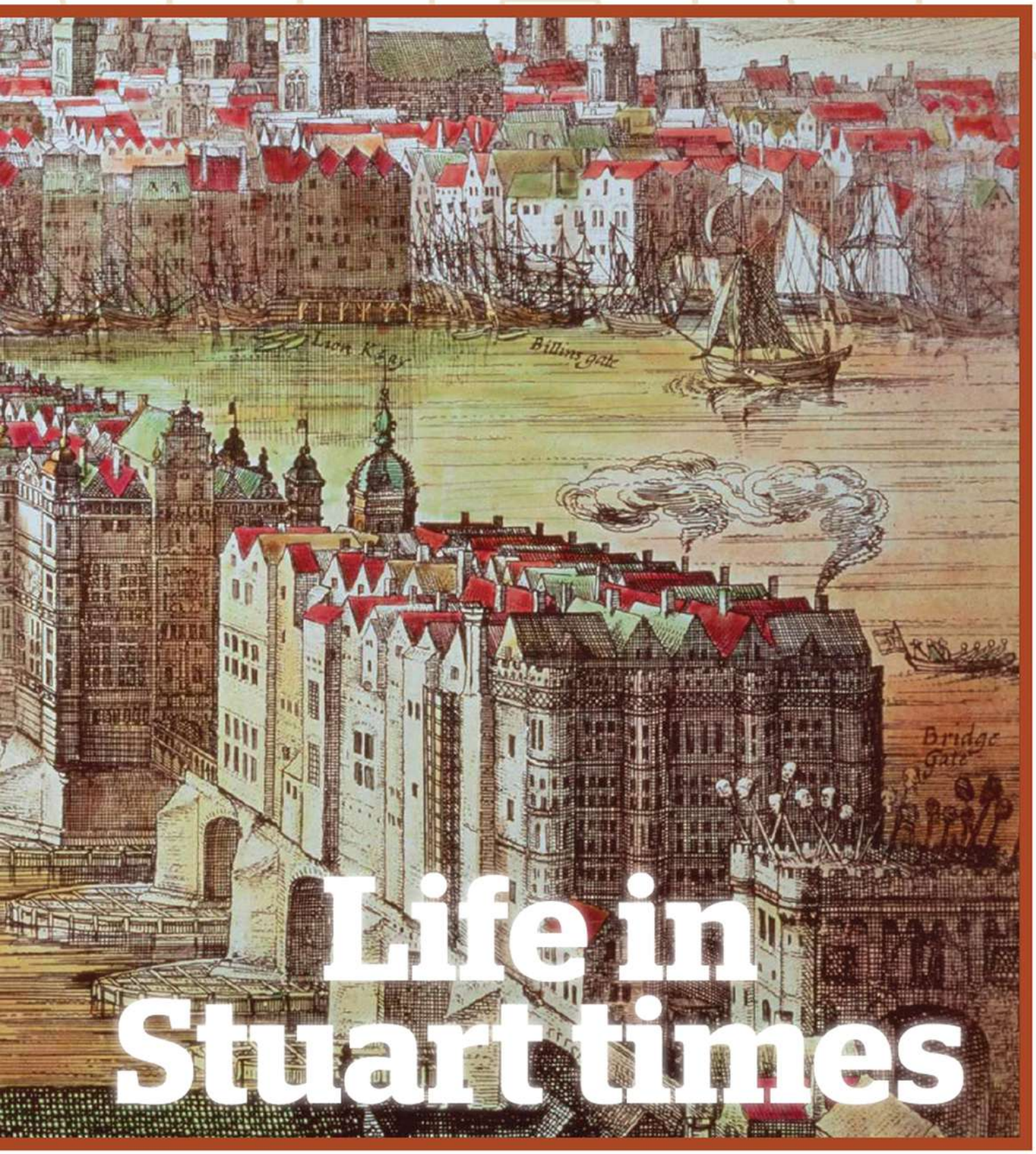
Edward Vallance is reader in early modern history at Roehampton University. He is the author of *The Glorious Revolution: 1688 – Britain's Fight for Liberty* (Abacus, 2007

LIFE IN TH
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Severed heads on spikes can be seen displayed on London Bridge in Claes Visscher's panorama of the city, made in 1616

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



Life in Stuart times



THE WAR ON WITCHES

Charlotte Hodgman talks to Owen Davies about five places associated with the witch hunts that saw hundreds put to death across early modern Britain

From Hollywood to *Harry Potter*, witches have been viewed with macabre fascination for centuries. But behind the stereotypical broomstick-flying hag lies a dark history of trials, persecution and torture that claimed the lives of hundreds.

As the aftershocks of religious division extended across Europe, fear spread that the Day of Judgment was nigh. Catholics viewed the rift as a sign that the antichrist was increasing his works in the world, while Protestants saw the corruption of the Catholic church as proof that the devil was near.

Fuelling concerns about the pernicious influence of magic and the devil was the revolution of print, which saw an influx of written texts from the continent, such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* (c1486), urging people to take decisive action in the battle with witches and magic. It was against this emotionally charged backdrop that Henry VIII introduced the first English statutes addressing witchcraft in 1542, followed by new, stricter, legislation by Elizabeth I in 1563 and James VI and I in 1604.

No one was safe from an accusation of witchcraft. However, marginalised women bore the brunt of the accusations – particularly elderly spinsters, widows, and those living alone. In fact, 80 per cent of those tried in Britain were women.

Begging lay at the root of many allegations, and beggars were often blamed for misfortunes that occurred after they were refused help. More often than not, accusations of witchcraft resulted from neighbourly disagreements, inextricably bound to a deep-rooted fear of malevolent magic and the devil.

As stories of continental trials spread and new laws filtered down through society, some took it upon themselves to lead the witch hunts, gathering evidence before trial as self-proclaimed 'witchfinder generals'. The most notorious of these in England was a Puritan called Matthew Hopkins who launched a campaign of terror against suspected English witches during the 1640s. These led to some 300 trials and the deaths of around 100 people in eastern England. Hopkins was by no means the only witch detector, but his reputation spread far and wide and he had a profound impact on those around him. One source from the time commented: "It is strange to tell what superstitious opinions, affections, relations, are generally risen amongst us, since the Witchfinders came into the Countrey."

Although the use of torture to extract a confession was illegal in England, Ireland

ALAMY



Pendle Hill in Lancashire saw the most famous witch hunt trial in 1612, resulting in the deaths of ten men and women

and Wales, it was permitted in Scotland, and less 'formal' types of torture were used at a local level, often presided over by a magistrate or local constable. One such method was sleep deprivation, whereby the accused would be forced to walk back and forth until exhausted and then denied rest. In Scotland, thumb screws and leg crushers were also used.

Another, more public and informal type of trial was 'swimming' the accused. The victim's right thumb would be tied to their left big toe and they would be thrown into a nearby pond or river. If they sank, they were innocent; if they floated, they had been rejected by the water as a servant of the devil, in a type of reverse baptism.

As a capital offence, witchcraft trials in England were held before a judge and a jury under the common law system, during which evidence against the accused was presented. Court records reveal stories of witches flying out of windows on broomsticks or cavorting with satanic imps. There are many theories to explain why the accused related such fantastical stories to open-mouthed juries – some historians cite mental health disorders; others attribute it to attention-seeking.

"Contrary to popular belief," explains Professor Owen Davies of the University of Hertfordshire, "witch trials were not a foregone conclusion; only 25 per cent of those tried across the period were found guilty and executed. In fact, the total number of people tried for witchcraft in England throughout the period was no more than 2,000."

Scotland had a quarter of England's population, yet tried 2,500 people and had an execution rate of around 67 per cent. Wales, however, held very few trials – no more than 34. This has mainly been attributed to cultural differences and language barriers, as well as a tendency to explain misfortune as work of fairies. This was also the case in Ireland.

By the late 17th century – thanks to a combination of judicial scepticism, low prosecution rates and the costs of pursuing a case through the courts – the number of accusations of witchcraft had plummeted. Many people turned instead to 'cunning folk' ('wise' men and women who practised 'good' witchcraft) and healers to combat malevolent forces. Witchcraft was finally decriminalised in Britain in 1736 – though people were still being accused of it as late as the 19th century. H

Owen Davies is a professor of social history at the University of Hertfordshire and author of *Paganism: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP, 2011)

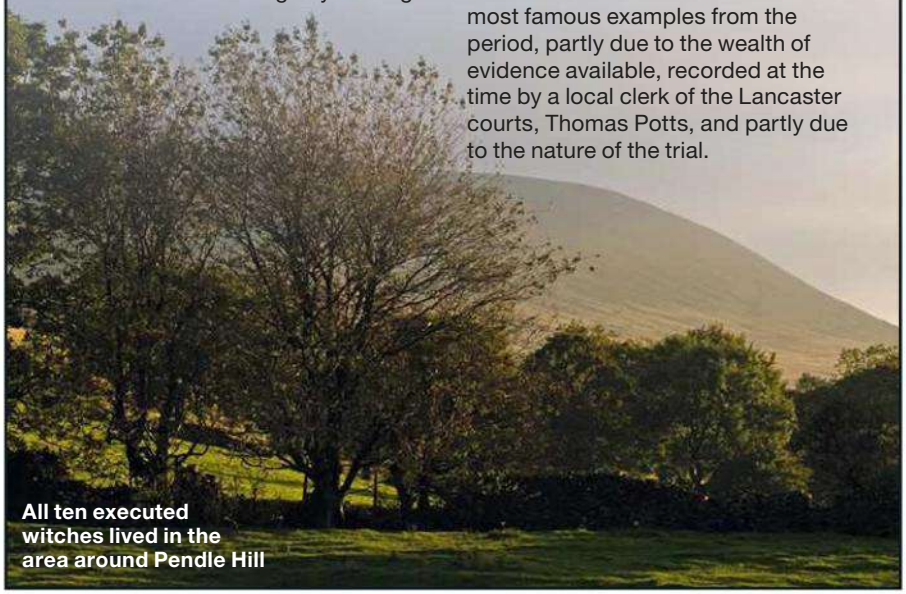
THE WAR ON WITCHES: FIVE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Pendle Hill Lancashire

Mass witch trials were rare in England; instead, a charge was usually based on a formal complaint from an injured party. However, in 1612, 16 people living around Pendle Hill were tried at Lancaster gaol, accused of selling their souls to the devil and murdering 17 people through witchcraft.

The initial accusation was directed at Alison Device for allegedly cursing a pedlar who had refused to give her some pins. When the pedlar later suffered a stroke, Alison was accused of causing him harm by witchcraft and, in her subsequent trial, incriminated other members of her family, who in turn named other village members. Ten were sentenced to death by hanging, and five were acquitted.

The Pendle witches are one of the most famous examples from the period, partly due to the wealth of evidence available, recorded at the time by a local clerk of the Lancaster courts, Thomas Potts, and partly due to the nature of the trial.



All ten executed witches lived in the area around Pendle Hill

2 Taunton Castle Somerset

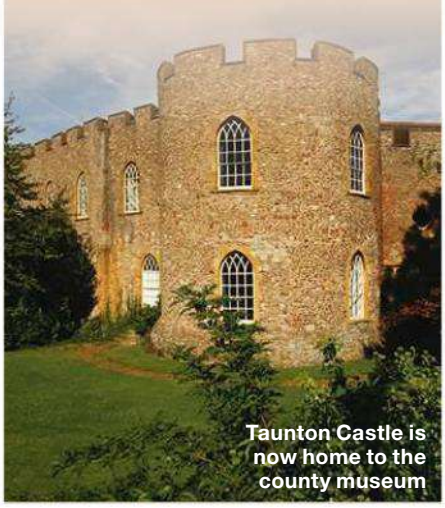
● *www.somerset.gov.uk*

The lead-up to the repeal of the witchcraft statutes in 1736 saw a shift in attitudes towards witch trials and a marked increase in judicial scepticism, as well as the rigorous examination of the evidence. Juries became increasingly disbelieving of witness's claims of supernatural activity and, consequently, fewer people pursued their claims through the law.

One of the last witch trials held in England, and the last in the south-west, was the case of Maria Stevens who, in 1707, was charged with bewitching an acquaintance, Dorothy Reeves. Although little evidence remains, we know that the trial was held at Taunton Castle and that Maria was acquitted and released after both judge and jury failed to believe the evidence given against her.

Five years later, England saw its last witchcraft conviction in the shape of Jane Wenham, who was later pardoned. Demonstrating the cynicism with which England's elite viewed accusations of witchcraft, when hearing the charge that Wenham flew on a broomstick, the judge allegedly joked that there was "no law against flying". The authorities in England were distancing themselves from popular beliefs.

The remains of the castle and later buildings now house the county museum, military museum and gallery.



Taunton Castle is now home to the county museum

ALAMY

3 Brandeston village Suffolk

● *www.brandeston.net*

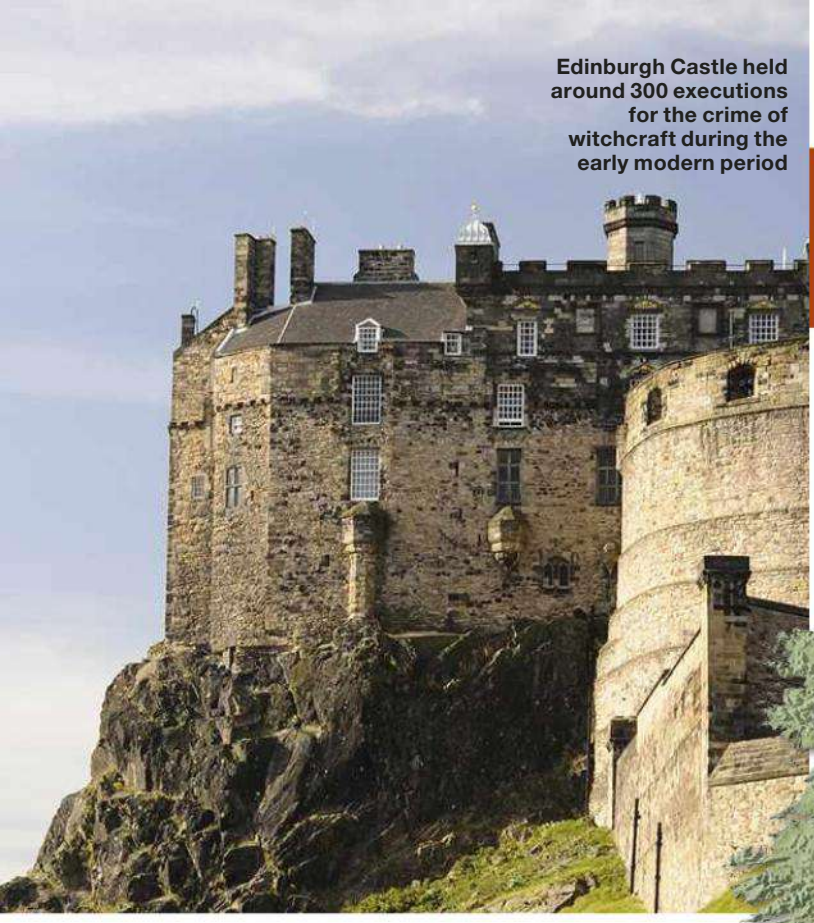
As the witch hunting momentum grew, self-appointed 'witchfinder generals' sprung up around Britain, devoted to extracting confessions of guilt. Matthew Hopkins, the most notorious of these, was responsible for one fifth of the total number of executions in England over the period. One of his targets, John Lowes, was the elderly vicar of Brandeston who was accused of witchcraft in 1642.

After being 'swum' in the moat at Framlingham Castle and proclaimed guilty after floating to the surface, Low was kept awake by Hopkins for "several nights together while running him backwards and forwards about his cell until out of breath… till he was weary of his life and scarce sensible of what he said or did". Ultimately, Lowes 'confessed' to sending imps to sink a ship near Harwich. Lowes was hanged at Bury St Edmunds in August 1645.

All Saints Church has a plaque dedicated to Lowes and an image of his hanging is depicted on the village sign.



Matthew Hopkins was England's most notorious witch hunter



Edinburgh Castle held around 300 executions for the crime of witchcraft during the early modern period



1 Pendle Hill, Lancashire

2 Taunton Castle, Somerset

3 Brandeston village, Suffolk

4 Edinburgh Castle, Edinburgh

5 Exeter Castle, Devon

4 Edinburgh Castle Edinburgh

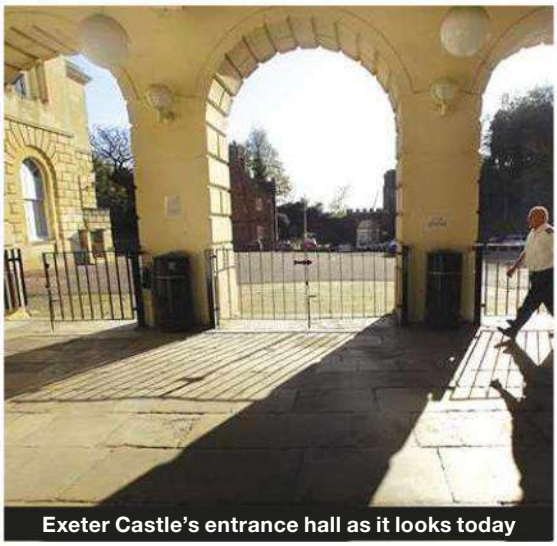
● *www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk*

Scotland saw numerous witch trials throughout the early modern period, many of which have been attributed to the zeal of the Calvinist clergy in alerting secular authorities to cases that appeared before them in the church courts.

Edinburgh Castle played a key role in the trial and execution of condemned witches; an estimated 300 were put to death on the castle's esplanade. One such figure was Agnes Finnie, an Edinburgh shopkeeper who was charged with 20 counts of witchcraft and sorcery, including placing "so frightful a disease on Beatrix Nisbet, for some other trifling offence, that she lost the use of her tongue". Arrested in 1644, Finnie was found guilty of witchcraft and held in the castle's dungeons. After strangulation, her body was burned on the esplanade.

Although the use of torture in this case was not officially recorded, it was permitted in Scotland, the most common format employed being sleep deprivation. Also widely used was 'witch pricking' – the method of piercing the skin to find areas of flesh that would not bleed.

Today, a small well on the castle's esplanade marks the spot where Agnes Finnie, and others, were executed for the crime of witchcraft. Edinburgh Castle and its dungeons are open to the public.



Exeter Castle's entrance hall as it looks today

5 Exeter Castle Devon

● *www.exetercastle.co.uk*

England's last executions for witchcraft took place in 1682 and involved three women from the town of Bideford: Temperance Floyd, Mary Trembles and Susanna Edwards. The trio were arrested "upon suspicion of having used some magical art, sorcery or witchcraft upon the body of Grace Barnes…" who complained of a "griping" in her "belly, stomach and breast".

The three women, two of whom were widows and the other a spinster, all confessed to meeting the devil during their trial at Exeter Castle, and sources from the time show their unpopularity. "A less zeal in a city or kingdom hath been the overture of defection and revolution, and if these women had been acquitted, it was thought the country people would have committed some disorder," claimed one witness.

Although little of the original castle remains, a plaque near the gatehouse names all three women along with a fourth woman, Alice Molland. She was sentenced to death but it is unclear whether she was executed, as there are no accounts of the sentence being carried out.

THINKSTOCK, ALAMY

Bad sports

Alistair Dougall describes how Puritan attempts to ban games such as football, wrestling and bowling divided the people of England in the 17th century

Just over four hundred years ago, in 1612, the Cotswolds hosted its own form of the Olympics. But, not only was it on a vastly smaller scale than the games today, it also took place at a time when – far from uniting people and nations – sports and their celebration were hugely divisive.

Organised by a local lawyer, Robert Dover, the 'Cotswold Olimpicks' were held at a natural amphitheatre now known as Dover's Hill. The Olimpicks became an annual event, with participants competing in sports that included wrestling, pike-throwing, leaping, running and hunting.

Dover's Olimpicks seem to have been designed, in part, to revive the sort of communal festivities that had been held throughout medieval England. May games, ales and wakes were all forms of communal celebration that reinforced neighbourly bonds. They took place after church on Sundays and holy days, and provided opportunities to feast, dance and play sports such as football, handball, running, bowling, archery and wrestling. Cock fighting and bear-baiting were also common entertainments.

Sporting value

However, the crown wanted men to focus on archery on Sundays and numerous acts were introduced in an attempt to prevent them from indulging in other sports. Typical of these is a 1365 decree that forbade men from playing "handball, football, club ball, cock fighting or other vain games of no value" in the hope that they would instead practise the archery skills that were seen as vital to the country's defence.

When holy days were banned during the English Reformation, Sunday became the day of leisure. Although church attendance now became compulsory, the church remained relaxed about what parishioners did after the church service.

Yet all that changed with the emergence of so-called Puritans in the late 16th century. Puritans were members of the established church, but believed zealously that both church and society needed further reform. As a contemporary pamphleteer observed, they were the "hotter sorte of Protestants". They contended that people should devote Sunday entirely to God, and sought to suppress any form of recreation on the 'Lord's Day'. They therefore gained a reputation as killjoys who condemned traditional revelry as either papist or pagan in origin and as an occasion of temptation and sin.

The Elizabethan clergymen Richard Greenham and Nicholas Bownd led the Puritan attack, insisting that no sports whatsoever were permissible on Sundays. Directly challenging established royal legislation, they argued that Sunday was "no fit time" for archery practice and declared that men "must not come to Church with their bowes and arrows in their hands".

"Filthie exercises"

Numerous Puritan writers denounced all manner of sports as Sabbath profanations. Phillip Stubbes, for example, claimed that wakes led to days of "drunkennesse, whoredome, gluttony, and other filthie sodomiticall exercises". He also attacked the May custom of going into the woods to collect garlands to adorn houses and maypoles as opportunities for fornication, claiming that of the many young women who went into the woods scarcely a third returned "undefiled".

Puritan assertions that these festivities led to debauchery were grossly exaggerated; certainly, there was no discernible increase in illegitimate births following May celebrations. However, ales and

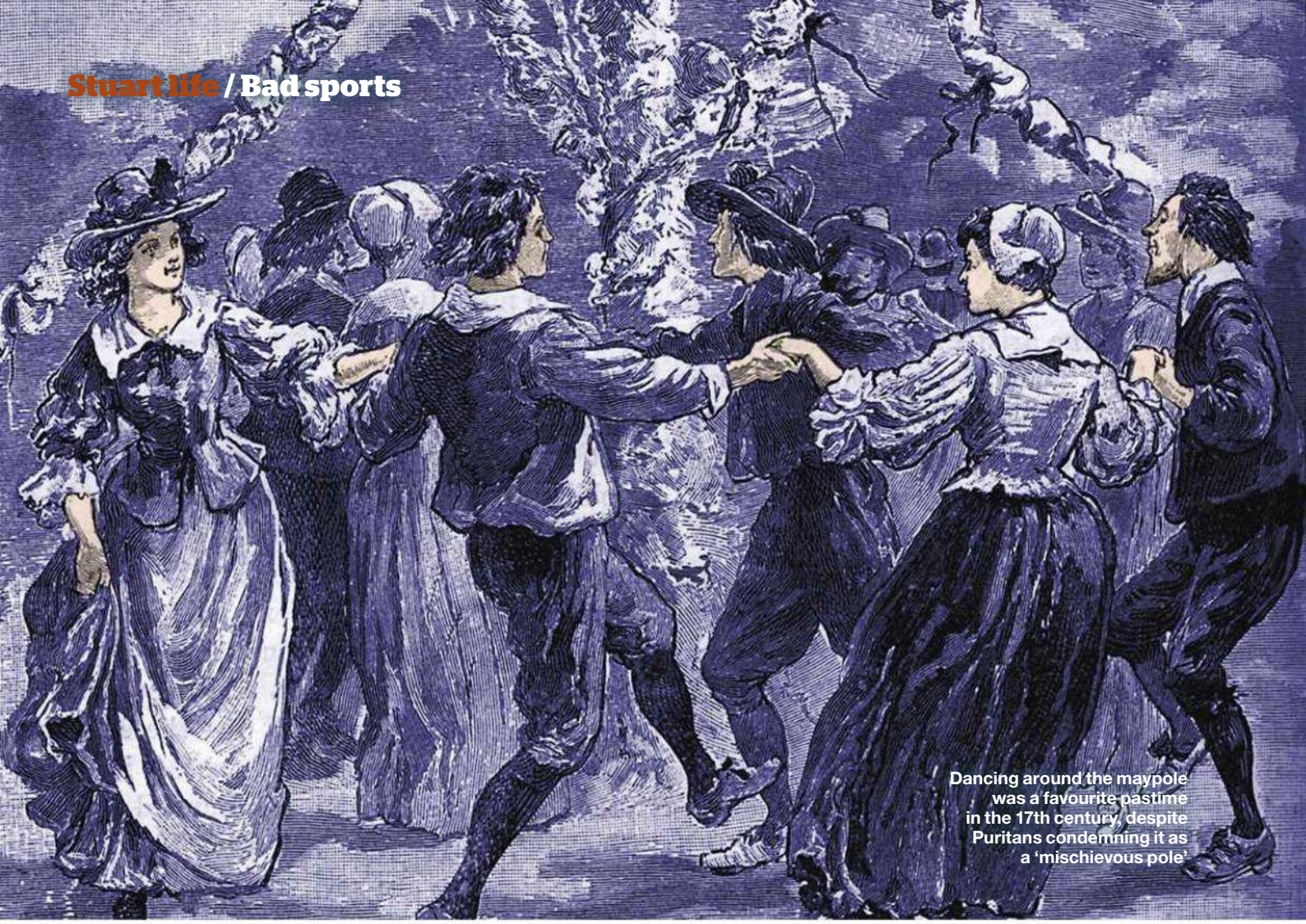


A man taking part in a hunt, as depicted in an early 17th-century English tapestry

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The title page for a collection of poems published in 1636 celebrating Robert Dover's 'Cotswold Olimpicks'.



Dancing around the maypole was a favourite pastime in the 17th century, despite Puritans condemning it as a 'mischievous pole'

wakes could easily get out of hand. Fuelled by drink, fights often broke out, as in 1614 when men from neighbouring parishes fought each other at May games held in Longdon, Worcestershire. The following year, a man was killed in fighting at a Devonshire ale. Disorder was so common that, in Lancashire, the eve of May Day was called 'mischief night'.

The Puritan attacks on revels came at a time of mounting anxiety over social order, as inflation and population growth led to an alarming increase in poverty. Puritan calls for reform added to these secular concerns about potential disorder, causing many local magistrates to attempt to restrict popular festivity. Consequently, ales and wakes steadily declined in many parts of the country.

The suppression of traditional revels increased tensions within English society. Maypoles, which had historically been symbols of a united community, now somehow represented the struggle between those who were seeking to suppress popular revelry and those who sought to defend it. Indeed, the decision by many town authorities to ban maypoles frequently led to clashes with sections of the local community. In Shrewsbury, for example, several people were jailed when they struggled with officials taking down the town's maypole. In Canterbury, the banning of the maypole prompted a group of morris men to dance outside the mayor's house in protest.

> "People were allowed to take part in fencing, archery, leaping and vaulting after they had attended church"

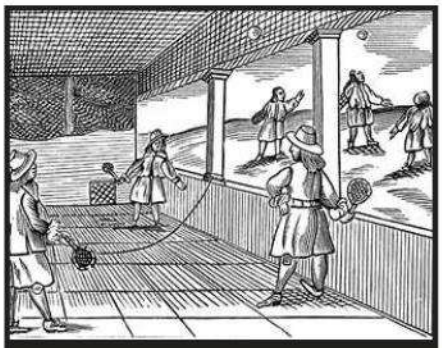
Yet the dancers had one very influential player on their side: the crown. James VI and I was even more enthralled with sport than the Tudors had been. He wrote approvingly of pastimes such as wrestling, leaping, running and "other faire and pleasant field-games". He also gave some of his own clothes – including a hat, feather and ruff – to Robert Dover "to grace him and consequently the solemnity" of the Cotswold Olimpicks. Dover even opened his games wearing James's clothes to signify the royal endorsement. And, while his predecessor Elizabeth I, despite attending many sporting events, never made any formal declaration about recreations, James oversaw a dramatic change in policy.

In 1616, Puritan magistrates in Lancashire backed an order forbidding recreations after church on Sundays. The following year, as King James was passing through Lancashire on his way to be entertained by Sir Richard Hoghton at Hoghton Tower, he was petitioned by locals complaining about the order against their traditional Sunday recreations. James, who disliked Puritanism, made a speech about "honest recreation" and, a few days later, issued a declaration "Concerning Lawful Sports" which licensed the playing in Lancashire of certain sports on Sundays.

James's *Book of Sports* – as it came to be known – stated the official view of the crown on the matter of Sunday recreation. Although bull-baiting and bowling were not permitted, as they often led to excessive gambling, people were expressly allowed to take part in dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting and "anie such harmeles recreation" after they had attended church. In 1618, James issued a similar declaration for the whole country.

Many people were scandalised by the licence that the king had given to Sunday recreations. Among them was a Yorkshire

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A game of court tennis in 1659

minister, William Clough, who told his congregation: "The king of Heauen doth bid you keepe his Sabboath… the king of England is a mortall man and he bids you breake it. Chuse whether of them you will followe."

Yet, while some were outraged by James's *Book of Sports*, others cited it to support their revelry. In Northampton, a Puritan woman who scolded servants for playing games on a Sunday was met with the response that they "must play upon the Sabboth... and obey the king's laws in that point or else be hanged". She replied that "they might choose whether the king should hang them for not obeying him or the devil burn them for so breaking the Sabbath".

In Exeter, a constable who tried to stop men playing trap-ball was defiantly told that "they played att noe unlawfull game and that the King [himself] did allowe it". And, in Marlborough, a parishioner cited the "king's book" when challenged for taking part in summer games.

Those who resented attempts to stop them enjoying traditional sports were, it seems, in little doubt as to who was to blame for the crackdown. While parishioners were in church at Albrighton in Staffordshire, a mob gathered outside beating drums, firing guns and shouting: "Come out, ye Puritans, come out".

Tensions between the two camps may have been running high during James's reign, yet they were as nothing compared to the ill-feeling that would sweep the land once his son Charles I ascended the throne.

In October 1633, following moves to ban Sunday recreations by magistrates in Somerset, Charles issued an amended version of his father's *Book of Sports*. Charles I deeply disliked Puritans and regarded their attempts to suppress traditional Sunday recreations as extremely dangerous.

Charles's father had prudently decided not to punish those ministers who refused to publish his declaration, but Charles was

ALAMY

EARLY MODERN GAMES

Despite protestations from the Puritans, King James VI and I and his successors wholly supported playing games on the Sabbath. These were some of the most popular games of the period:

FOOTBALL

Early football was a mass ball game with virtually no rules and no limit on the number of players. Whole villages or sizeable teams from rival parts of a single parish would challenge each other to a contest, which, if it involved neighbouring parishes, would often spread over several miles of countryside.

Football was invariably violent and frequently resulted in broken limbs; even fatalities. Phillip Stubbes called it "a bloody and murthering practice". James I claimed football was "meeter for laming, then making able the users thereof".

BOWLING

Bowling was played both on greens and in bowling alleys, and was popular at all social levels. Yet, the law prohibited the lower orders from playing bowls because it so often led to gambling and unruly behaviour.

Nonetheless, there were hundreds of illegal wooden bowling alleys where people played a rowdy sort of nine pins or skittles, in sharp contrast to the rather sedate form of bowls, or lawn bowling, that the gentry played on their bowling greens. The Puritan Robert Crowley declared that hell awaited men who frequented bowling alleys and those who failed to close them down.

WRESTLING

Stripped to their doublet and hose, two men would wrestle while, typically, the onlookers linked arms around them to form the wrestling ring. The man who succeeded in forcing his opponent's upper body to touch the ground won the bout. Wrestling was believed to be of military benefit as it kept men fit and "full of manlinesse". James approved of it as a sport that enabled a man to "exercise his engine, which surely with idelenesse will ruste".

James included it in court entertainments put on for his brother-in-law, Christian IV of Denmark, when he visited his sister, Queen Anne.

ANIMAL BAITING

This was extremely popular in early modern England, and led to considerable gambling. Bear-baiting was the most common form, but dogs also baited bulls and badgers for public amusement. Mary I and Elizabeth I attended bear-baitings, while James VI and I watched both bear and bull-baitings – and even introduced the baiting of bears by lions.

Few contemporaries acknowledged the sport's barbarity, although Phillip Stubbes asked: "What Christian heart can take pleasure to see one poore beast to rent, teare, and kill another, and all for his foolish pleasure?"

RUNNING, LEAPING AND VAULTING

These were seen as beneficial to keep men fit and ready for war. Foot races over both short and long distances were commonly run at wakes and ales. Leaping could be like tumbling in the air in a somersault or involved leaping through a hoop. Vaulters leapt over horses or onto a horse's back.

King James wrote that both running and leaping "may further abilitie and maintaine health", but did not regard leaping or vaulting as princely pastimes, dismissing "such tumbling trickes as only serve for comedians… to win their bread with".

MAYPOLES

Puritans were fierce in their condemnation of maypoles, which they saw as a pagan symbol and denounced as the 'mischievous pole', 'madding pole', and 'stinking idol'.

The taking down of maypoles symbolised a general attack on traditional revelry and could explain the tragic incident in May 1572 when a man was shot and killed as he tried to take away the maypole standing on the green in the Sussex village of Warbleton. The man was from a neighbouring village and he may have been trying to destroy the maypole as something ungodly – or simply to steal it as a trophy.

determined to assert his authority in this matter. He believed in the power of the pulpit, once telling his son that "people are governed by the pulpit more than the sword". He therefore ordered clergymen to read out his *Book of Sports* in every parish church. However, by 1633, political, social and religious tensions had increased considerably, and the enforcement of Charles's declaration meant that the reaction to it was correspondingly more intense.

Duly punished

Numerous Puritan ministers refused to read Charles's *Book of Sports*, and were duly punished. Some bishops were zealous in rooting out dissenters. For example, Bishop Wren of Norwich suspended 30 ministers for refusing to read the declaration, while Bishop Piers of Bath and Wells suspended at least 25. Bishop Curle of Winchester reportedly suspended five ministers in a single day.

The fact is, most ministers did read the book, but even many moderate clergymen felt uncomfortable about promoting sports and revels from the pulpit. The Northamptonshire rector Nicholas Estwick recorded that the *Book of Sports* caused "distraction & griefe in many honest mens hearts". He was particularly unhappy about condoning ales and May games, which he believed led to "sin & ... great disorder".

Charles's declaration did not just offend the Puritans. Thomas May claimed that, although it allowed "country people… sports, and pastimes of jollity", many people "were ashamed to be invited by the authority of Church-men, to … a thing of infirmity". One such was Richard Conder, who had been addicted to playing football after church as a young man. When his minister read the Book of Sports from the parish pulpit, Conder had a dramatic change of heart, as he later recalled: "Now, thought I, iniquity is established by a law, and sinners are hardened in their sinful ways!"

Having said this, the *Book of Sports* was popular with thousands of ordinary men and women who cherished their traditional way of life, and it gave many people the courage to hold revels again in places where they had previously been suppressed. Parishes in various parts of the country revived ales in the 1630s, while maypoles were once again set up in places like Symondsbury in Dorset, Dundry in Somerset and Birchington in Kent, where the church wardens had paid to take down the maypole in 1606.



GETTY IMAGES

"The Cotswold Olimpicks were brought to a halt in 1643 and were not revived until the restoration of the monarchy"

Short-lived revival

Yet the revival in revelry was to prove short-lived. When, in April 1640, Charles I called his first parliament for 11 years, many MPs seized their opportunity to attack the *Book of Sports*. Puritan MPs pushed to impose strict Sabbath observance and, in September 1641, the Commons resolved that all sports on Sundays "be foreborne and restrained". In May 1643, parliament ordered the burning of copies of the *Book of Sports* by the common hangman at Cheapside.

By then, the country was embroiled in a bitter civil war that forced people to choose sides. The Puritan Richard Baxter recorded that "People that were for the King's Book, for Dancing and Recreation on the Lord's Days… were against the Parliament". In fact, many factors determined people's allegiances throughout the war, but some undoubtedly fought to protect their traditional way of life. They were perfectly correct to see it as under threat.

The Cotswold Olimpicks were brought to a halt in 1643 and were not revived until after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Indeed, the Interregnum saw the banning of all ales, wakes and summer games, and it was only with the Restoration that people were once again free to enjoy their traditional revelry. Charles II's progress through London in May 1660 included a maypole and morris dancers and signalled the end of the suppression of traditional festivity.

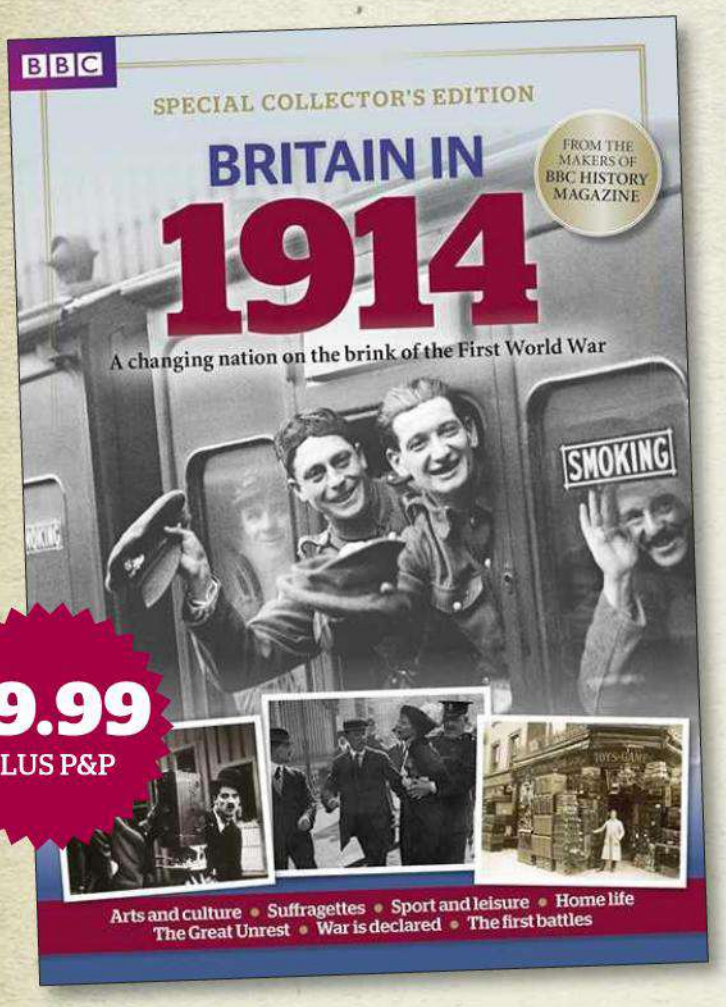
From an early 21st-century perspective, it is easy to see why the restoration of traditional festivities was accompanied by such widespread popular celebration. And it is perhaps fitting to end this account of how sport divided the English in the 17th century with the words of Robert Dover, written in a poem celebrating his own 'Olimpick' games:

"And let Content and Mirth all those attend, That doe all harmless and honest sports defend!"

Alistair Dougall teaches history at the Godolphin School, Salisbury. He is the author of *The Devil's Book*, published by University of Exeter Press, 2011

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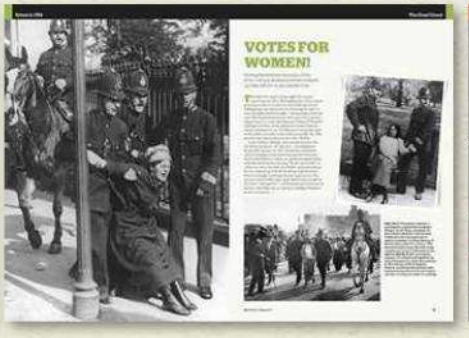
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Breaking the mould

Delving into the rich records of the Verney family, **Adrian Tinniswood** shows how women broke the rules in 17th-century England

Nicolaes Maes's *Lady In Red* is a study in self-assurance. Similarly, the Verney archive shows womens' lives as far removed from the conduct desired by 17th-century society

August 1654 and Mall Verney was alone in London, in debt and six months pregnant. Her letters, which still survive, offer a vivid picture of a girl with nowhere to turn.

The father of her child, an apothecary's assistant named Robin Lloyd, showed no sign of wanting to make an honest woman of her. So she explained her belly by saying she was suffering from colic; then she took a massive dose of purgatives in the hope that it might bring on an abortion. That failed so she put herself in the hands of a local brothel keeper with experience in managing unwanted pregnancies. And finally, when she discovered this was going to cost more money than she had, she confessed everything to her brother Sir Ralph Verney, the head of the family. If Sir Ralph would only give her £20 to pay for her expenses, she would do anything. "Truly brother," she wrote, "if you please but to disburse so much for me I shall ever acknowledge myself obliged to you; and if [it] please God to send me recovered, I will go to any place that you shall desire me; or do anything that you think fitting for me. I will refuse no offer of yours."

Even as a teenager Mall was described as being plain but "wild as a buck", and was once thrown out of her pregnant sister's house after making a pass at the woman's husband. Now, as friends and relations speculated over the way she "so publicly showed her great belly" around town, there was debate about which of her many admirers might be responsible. When the truth came out, the Verney men-folk were appalled. She faced "shame, imprisonment, beggary (not having wherewithal to buy rags to wrap a child in), alienation from all her friends," said an uncle. "And I want foremost to express the ugliness of it towards God and man."

Avoiding scandal

Sir Ralph Verney reluctantly agreed to stump up the £20 to avoid scandal. He also arranged for Mall to give birth in a more salubrious setting than a whore-house – on condition she gave away the baby and left London to make a new life for herself where people didn't know about her past. "The Bermudas is much better than Ireland," suggested her uncle, helpfully. In November she was delivered of a healthy boy, who was taken in by Robin Lloyd's married brother. But now her predicament was behind her, wild-as-a-buck Mall decided she didn't want to swap London for Ireland or Bermuda. What she wanted was more money from her brother, so she could pay off her debts and continue to see her lover.

And she got it. When Sir Ralph refused to let her keep her maid, she announced that she was finding the girl a post in the Hampshire village where their sister Cary lived. If that happened, Mall's shameful secret would be all round the village in no time. "I would not have her come down by no means," a panic-stricken Cary told Sir Ralph. So she was allowed to keep the maid. When Ralph refused her money for clothes, she told him that "if you do not please to help me I am confident I must go naked". She got the clothes.

This gentle blackmail went on for two-and-a-half years, during which time Mall married her Robin, conceived another child and promised to leave London so often that Sir Ralph stopped believing anything she said. Finally, in the spring of 1657, Mall and "he whom she calls her husband" (Ralph refused to write Lloyd's name) decamped for Wales, having secured a promise her allowance would continue.

Mall Verney's story is intriguing not only for the light it sheds on gentry illegitimacy in the mid-17th century, but for what it tells us about the extent to which women were prepared to stand up to male authority. And she was far from being the only female member of the Verney clan to take control of her life. In 1639, her aunt, a wealthy widow named Margaret Pulteney, ignored the courtiers and nobles who were being lined up as potential husbands by her male relatives – and married a Catholic. No-one in her fiercely Protestant family

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"Let them devise their worst,' she said. **'I defy them all**. None in the world can call me to an account for my actions'"



In 1654, Cary (above) was terrified that news of her 'wild' sister Mall's illegitimate pregnancy would get out

had a good word to say for Papists, and their reactions were predictable: her mother asked for a dress of sackcloth – "and line it with ashes"; and her brother-in-law (Mall's father), prayed that the groom would see action against the Scots, since "if he does, some lucky bullet may free her of this misfortune". Margaret, however, was superb: "Let them devise their worst," she said. "I defy them all. None in the world can call me to an account for my actions".

A reputation for drink

Mall's five sisters were just as determined. Their mother died in 1641 and their father was killed at the battle of Edgehill in October 1642, leaving brother Ralph as head of the family. At this point, only Cary Verney was married, to a Royalist officer, and a skirmish near Oxford would soon see her widowed. The other five girls – Susan, Pen, Peg, Mall and Betty – had little to offer suitors in the way of financial inducement and, when Sir Ralph fled to the Continent in 1643, leaving a mountain of debt behind him and not returning until 1654, their options became more limited still.

Nevertheless, in 1646 three of them managed to find husbands. Peg, who was 22, chose a wrong 'un: within weeks of her wedding she was struggling to cope with her husband's temper, which grew worse with every passing month. Susan found a childless widower who was kind, but poor – so poor, in fact, that the couple honeymooned in the Fleet Prison. Pen, 24, married a cousin with a reputation for drink and violence. She soon regretted her decision. On one occasion, he chased her round the house with a knife, swearing he wouldn't rest until he had washed his hands in her blood.

But like Mall, the other Verney women could show a less compliant side when the occasion presented itself. There was an embarrassing scene in the middle of Aylesbury one day when Pen and her husband were waiting to board the London coach. It was raining and Denton pushed his wife out of the way in his haste to secure an inside seat; she punched him in the face and he was left to ride behind the carriage, soaked to the skin, nursing a black eye. Peg, having put up with her violent husband for years, walked out on him in 1657 and never went back.

Seventeenth-century England was pretty clear about how its women should behave. Modesty, meekness, compassion, courtesy and piety were "those general qualifications, which are at once the duty and the ornament of the female sex". If a woman's husband fooled around, and many did, her best course of action was to maintain a dignified silence and use his guilt to get something out of him. "Whether it be to cover or redeem his offence, you may have the good effect of it whilst it lasteth."

But the more we come to know the Verneys, the more we realise how far divorced from reality was the ideal of compliant womanhood constructed by male writers. In the early 1690s, Sir Ralph Verney arranged a match between his grand-daughter Molly and a well-off lawyer named Dormer. Molly, whose father was dead and whose mother was mad, generally deferred to her grandfather's wishes, but was unable to summon up much enthusiasm for the marriage. In the in summer of 1693, everyone found out why. She was already married. "I hope you will excuse my not giving you notice of this before", she said in the note she left when she walked out of the family home. "I was in fear of putting you in a passion, the sight of which my temper cannot very well bear."

Shame and infamy

Our final example of non-compliant Verney womanhood is Sir Ralph's niece, Pen Stewkeley. After Cary Verney's husband was killed in the Civil War, she married a widower, John Stewkeley. Pen was one of their daughters and, in the early 1690s, she went to live with her godmother, washing and mending and generally making herself useful. Like many unmarried girls in her position, she was nudged into the role of poor relation, dependent for the rest of her life on the whims of others. So it came as a shock to her family when, at the beginning of August 1695, she suddenly announced that she had slept with her sister's fiancé, a young clergyman named William Vickers. Not once, not twice, but often. Very often. The family was appalled, but Pen got her way, married the clergyman and they lived happily until his death 24 years later.

How typical were the Verney women? It is hard to say. But the most delightful thing is that the Verney women did confound expectations of polite female behaviour with such cheerful vigour. Driven by love, passion, courage, stubbornness and a fear of spinsterhood, they refused to do as they were told. They may not have been typical, but if Mall and the rest teach us nothing else, they show that no matter what commentators said about the submissive position of women in 17th-century England, the reality of individual experience was more complicated and more compelling. H

Adrian Tinniswood is the author of *The Verneys: A True Story of Love, War and Madness in 17th-Century England* (Vintage, 2008)

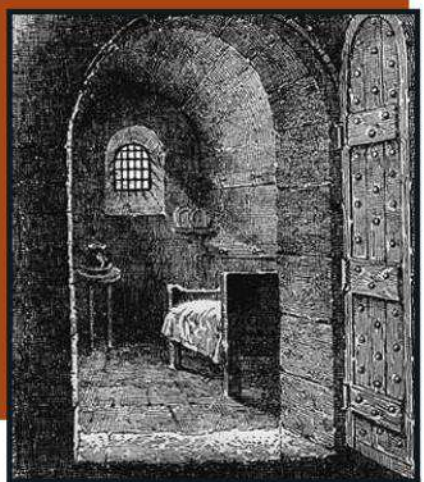
HIGHWAYMEN AND BLACK SHEEP

It wasn't just the women, Verney men were troublemakers, too

It wasn't only the Verney women who explored the boundaries of acceptable gentry behaviour. Cousin Dick was a highwayman and a house-breaker. "I have no great news," he wrote nonchalantly from Newgate Prison in 1685, "but only that I think to die next week." And so he did.

The real black sheep was Sir Ralph Verney's brother Tom. He forged bills, deserted wives, engaged in cowardly backstreet assaults and quoted the Bible at every opportunity. On one occasion he told Ralph it was his duty to buy him some new clothes, since God "promised Abrasham to grant him his suit for the righteous' sake".

His high point as a villain came in 1649, while he was on the run in France after breaking into his brother's study and stealing money. He sought refuge in a monastery, pretending to be a zealous Catholic, and repaid the monks by filling his bags with vestments, pictures and altar plate and selling the lot in Calais.



One of the Verney men was a highwayman who died in prison

COURTESY OF SIR EDMUND VERNEY/CLAYDON HOUSE TRUST, GETTY IMAGES



Sir Anthony van Dyck's 1638 portrait of Anne Carr, Countess of Bedford. By the 17th century imports of different fabrics and dyes meant dresses became much more diverse

Dressing to impress

Women of substance in the 17th century took delight in wearing the latest styles from London. But, says **Tim Reinke-Williams**, make a mistake and you'd soon attract scorn. You might even get driven out of town...

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

The clothes people wear matter a great deal in the 21st century. Choosing an outfit for a job interview or a first date requires careful thought and preparation. In Tudor and Stuart England, dress was important too, and the daily lives of ordinary women were affected by what they chose to wear – especially in London, which by 1700 was the largest city in Europe.

In 1616, Thomas Tuke published a pamphlet called *A Treatise Against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women*, in which he complained that "once a yeere at least" an Englishwoman "would faine see London, tho' when she comes there, she have nothing to doe, but to learn a new fashion". Although hostile to those who lavished too much time on their appearance, Tuke's comments about women coming to the capital in order to view the latest trends were accurate.

A major attraction of London was the range of shopping opportunities. By Queen Elizabeth's reign in the second half of the 16th century, merchants were importing a wide range of different fabrics, dyes and textiles that meant that clothes were becoming more diverse and colourful. Most of this linen and lace came from Italy and the Low Countries but, by the end of the 17th century, more exotic commodities such as East Indian chintz and calicos were available too.

Women thus had a selection of fabrics to choose from and were able to purchase a range of accessories as well. These were both decorative and practical. Muffs not only kept hands warm, but functioned as substitute handbags to store handkerchiefs, money and scent. Face masks and hoods were popular too, enabling women to move around the busy city without being recognised. Many women personalised their clothes by adding laces, ribbons and flowers, or by embroidering designs and patterns.

Clothes could be purchased from many different places. Wealthy women, such as the wives of London citizens, shopped at the Royal Exchange and the New Exchange, but tailors, shoemakers, embroiders, glove-makers and milliners could be found throughout the City and in neighbouring Westminster.

As the clothing industry developed, more ready-to-wear clothes became available at cheaper prices. But many women continued to make their own clothes or purchased second-hand ones, often from other women who were prominent in the trade. Many of these second-hand items would have been stolen; and shoplifting by women became a growing problem in the later decades of the 17th century.

Yet even law-abiding women did not have to purchase all the clothes they acquired. Growing numbers of women worked as domestic servants, and were given work clothes by their employers. For example, one Mrs Wynnington made a gown for her servant, Anne Fenton, which was to be paid for out of her wages. Young people gave and received clothes as gifts when courting, elderly women left items of clothing and textiles to female relatives and friends in their wills, and poor women received donations of clothes via their parish if they were eligible for poor relief.

Laced up to the neck

London women were thought to be more fashion-conscious and better-dressed than their sisters in the provinces, and, when visiting, were said to "take all their best apparel with them" so "that their friends in the Country, may see all their bravery".

Travellers from other countries also commented favourably on the dress of metropolitan women. In 1562, the Italian Alessandra Magno observed that women wore "dresses laced up to the neck, which make them appear very graceful" and, in 1592, Duke Frederick of Wirtemberg thought they were "magnificently apparelled", perhaps because some of the women he saw wore "gowns after the old German fashion". In 1662, the Dutchman William Schellinks went walking in Hyde Park and afterwards wrote how "one can see here the most beautiful ladies' dresses".

Wearing appropriate clothes for the occasion was very important. Working women needed to have a set of practical informal clothes for everyday wear, but would have aspired to have particular items and outfits to wear on special occasions. In 1660, Elizabeth Pepys, the wife of the famous diarist Samuel, changed her clothes before she went to see her husband and their friend at The Miter, a tavern in Wood Street. In May 1684, Joan Kirk refused to go and visit her husband's cousin because she believed she lacked clothes which would be "good enough to go a visiting". Her husband, Edward, only managed to persuade her to come with him after Joan borrowed a hood and scarf from another woman.

People noticed if women wore anything unusual or distinctive. When Elizabeth Hazard went out in "her best apparel", her

"Shoplifting by women became a growing problem in the later decades of the 17th century"



A coloured engraving showing the "habit" of a wealthy lady in c1630. By this time, women were personalising their clothes with laces, ribbons and flowers

GETTY IMAGES

neighbours were quick to take notice and asked her where she was going. Women also dressed well if they had to appear in court and were keen to create a good impression. Christian Stappleton wore a cloak and taffeta gown when she gave evidence on behalf of her mistress, Jane Hope – although it was alleged that Jane had loaned the clothes to Christian.

One of the main reasons young single women wanted to dress well was to attract the attention of suitors and potential husbands. When Rebecca Langford left Norbury in Staffordshire, she was deemed to be "somewhat bare in apparel", but when she returned from London, it was noted that she was "very well apparelled and brought with her a very proper man".

In the 1670s, Hannah Woolley wrote an advice book for young women wishing to become the companions of gentlewomen, in which she commented that there was "a kind of privilege in youth for wearing fashionable clothes" and that dressing well would "add more beauty".

Up to a point, Woolley was correct: in all likelihood, young women were more obsessed with keeping up with the latest fashions. But dress mattered to older women too as it reflected their status and authority. Married women wore distinctive scarves and hoods, and when Francis Barnham became sheriff in 1570, his wife, Alice, had her portrait painted in which she wore a fur-trimmed velvet gown to show off her ascent in London society.

Dressing well also helped women to find paid employment. The women who worked in the shops in the Exchange were deemed to be well dressed; Elizabeth James took on one young woman as a servant because she was "a pretty young wench, and handsomely apparelled".

In 1659, Goody Marstone was given 12 shillings by the vestry of the parish of St Benet Paul's Wharf so that she could provide clothes for the orphaned daughter of her friend Goody Tessy to help the girl to get a place as a domestic servant. Evidently the vestrymen thought this would be a worthwhile investment, ensuring that in the long run there would be one less poor woman for them to provide for.

The fashion police

During the 17th century, particular decades witnessed fashion crazes. In the 1610s, women wore doublets and broad-brimmed hats, both of which were considered to be very masculine items of clothing. In the 1690s, complex top-knot hairstyles, incorporating large quantities of ribbons, were all the rage.

Moralists were quick to condemn these trends. On 22 February 1619, John Williams preached a sermon before King James VI and I on abuses of apparel and, in the 1690s, many ballads, the pop songs of the age, condemned the fashion for top-knots, arguing that young women would turn to prostitution in order to afford the new hairstyle.

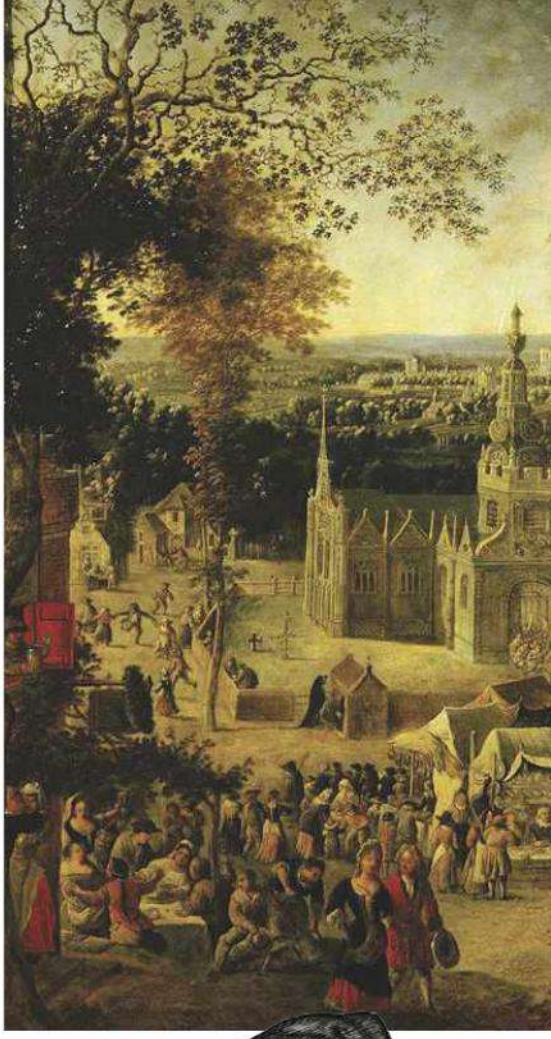
Legal records reveal that London prostitutes at the upper end of the vice trade, the early modern equivalent of escorts, were well dressed. These women were given specific outfits in order to attract clients and many received clothes as payment in kind for their services. One Elizabethan bawd, Mistress Hibbens, had "divers suits of apparels", including "silk gowns of several colours" which were worn by the girls who worked for her.

Women in early modern London therefore had a wide range of clothes to choose from – and various means to acquire them. This gave rise to both opportunities and problems. The medieval sumptuary laws had placed more limits on the dress of men than women. When this legislation was abolished in 1604, women faced no legal restrictions on what they could wear. However, going out in costly apparel which was deemed to be above one's station or revealing too much cleavage, risked the wearer being subject to abuse from moralists, clergymen and neighbours of both sexes.

Dress was important in the 16th and 17th centuries because it was supposed to reveal at a glance the social rank, gender and morality of the wearer. But, in practice, the clothes of noblewomen and the wives of wealthy citizens were not always significantly different from those of high-class prostitutes. Cross-dressing was not unusual either. Before the Restoration, male actors played the female roles, while some women chose to wear men's clothing, either to be fashionable, as a reflection of their sexuality, or because it enabled them to walk the city streets in disguise without being harassed by men.

In the 16th and 17th centuries – as in the 21st – clothes offered opportunities for women to empower themselves and create individual identities. But choosing what to wear was a difficult business, and making a fashion faux pas could have disastrous consequences. H

Dr Tim Reinke-Williams is a senior lecturer in history at the University of Northampton, specialising in early modern British history. He is the author of *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)





Wenceslaus Hollar's 1643 etching, Winter, shows one of four female figures representing the four seasons

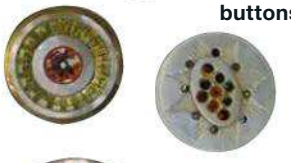
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A painting by Jan Griffier (1652–1718) showing the outskirts of London, whose female inhabitants were thought to be far more fashionable than their counterparts in the provinces









ABOVE: **An illustration of typical 17th-century attire of a gentlewoman (left), burgher's wife (middle) and a countrywoman (right)**
LEFT: **A collection of buttons from the period**



The Laton jacket: worn by Margaret Laton and made between 1610 and 1615

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"One young woman got a job as a servant because she was 'a pretty young wench, and handsomely apparelled'"

FASHION BLUNDERS OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Deciding on an outfit required considerable care to avoid a fashion faux pas

Looking like a whore

Early modern women tried to strike a balance between being fashionable and attractive, but not showing too much flesh. In 1628, Catherine Baker was brought before the church courts for defaming Christian Nevell as a "button-smock whore", an insult which suggests that Catherine thought Christian's outfit was too revealing.

Wearing what you like

Jane Martindale wanted to move to the capital because she would have more freedom of choice in which clothes she could wear. Her brother Adam claimed that, in their home county of Lancashire, any woman who wore a fashionable hood, scarf or gown "would have beene accounted an ambitious foole".

Plagued by the wrong outfit

In 1616, the pamphleteer and playwright Thomas Dekker wrote of how one "young handsome maid, in very good apparel" visited her sister in Kent, but was driven out of the town because the local people noticed her fashionable clothes and assumed that she had come from London where the plague was raging.

Getting carried away at the shops

In 1657, Margaret Harlakenden bought £120 worth of wedding clothes in London. Her father, Richard, was unhappy that his daughter had spent such a large sum, but he "paid the scores". Weddings were opportunities for celebration and extravagance, and Richard knew he could not risk being seen to be a miser.

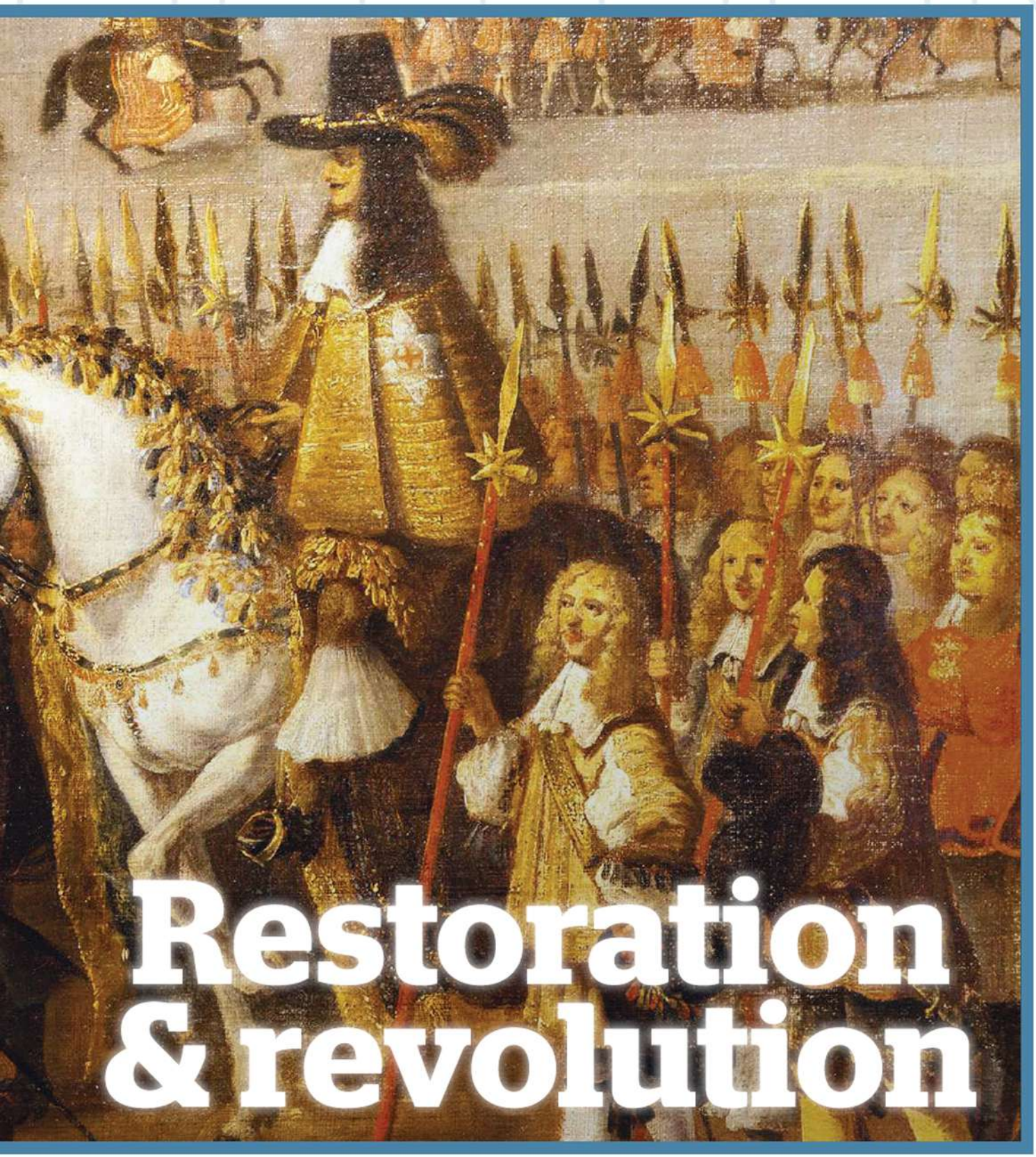
Dressing up and falling down

In 1665, Samuel Pepys described how "Mrs Jennings, one of the duchess's maids dressed herself like an orange wench and went up and down and cried oranges – till falling down or by such accident… her fine shoes were discerned and she put to a great deal of shame".



Charles II rides in a triumphant cavalcade through London on 22 April 1661 before his coronation at Westminster Abbey

STEVE VIDLER/ALAMY



Restoration & revolution



THE PEOPLE'S PRINCE

Jenny Uglow considers how Charles II used charm, spin and some good old-fashioned pomp and circumstance to woo the nation after the Restoration



Sir Peter Lely's portrait of King Charles II wearing the robes of the Sovereign of the Order of the Garter, c1675

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

In the spring of 1660, the 29-year-old Charles II and his court were virtually in rags, with – wrote Samuel Pepys – not a coat among them worth more than 40 shillings. All this was soon to change.

On 4 April 1660, Charles was in Breda in Holland, at the court of his sister Mary, the widow of William II of Orange. From here he issued the Declaration of Breda, a document that the parliament at Westminster would seize upon as offering the terms for his return.

Charles's tone was confident and his promises clear. They included a full pardon to all who appealed to the king within 40 days, except those who had signed his father Charles I's death warrant in 1649, "liberty to tender consciences" (unless religious differences threatened national peace), and payment of arrears of army pay. Questions regarding the complicated property deals during the Commonwealth (the republic that ruled from 1649–60) would be resolved by the new parliament – deftly ducking a potentially divisive task.

On the same day, Charles wrote a bold letter to the speaker of the House of Commons. Its language would have horrified his father, who had so strongly defied the Commons' authority. The liberties and powers of both king and parliament, Charles II wrote, were "best preserved by preserving the other". True, he desired to avenge his father's death, but his chief desire was peace and he appealed to the MPs as "wise and dispassionate men and good patriots".

This appeasing letter was typical of Charles's strategy. By April 1660, he had been in exile for almost 15 years, dragging his impoverished supporters around the continent, appealing for help, begging for favours. His sheltered childhood at the courts of St James and Whitehall had been shattered by the Civil War. At 12, he stood by his father's side when Charles I raised his standard at Edgehill; at 15, he was made commander of the army in the West Country; and when his father begged him to leave, in 1647, he fled first to Jersey and then to join his mother, Henrietta Maria, in the echoing corridors of St Germain, a pensioner of his young cousin Louis XIV. In 1651, he had made an ill-fated return to Britain, leading a Scottish army south to Worcester where his troops were cut down in the narrow streets. His escape, wandering the countryside supported by local people until he took a boat to France, would become the stuff of Restoration myth.

By April 1660, Charles's chief aim was to regain his throne – and stay there. He had recently moved to Breda from Brussels in the Spanish Netherlands on the advice of General Monck, the former parliamentary commander in Scotland, who had suggested that a Catholic city might not be the best base for an aspiring Protestant king.

Monck was to be the true architect of the king's return. After Cromwell's death in 1658, the British people, worn down by high taxes and declining trade, had become increasingly dispirited by the disputes between parliament and the New Model Army. When Monck marched south from Scotland, people besieged him with pleas to call a new parliament, knowing that it would return the king. In March, the new 'Convention Parliament' was duly elected, full of royalist supporters. It was then that Monck made his private overtures to Charles.

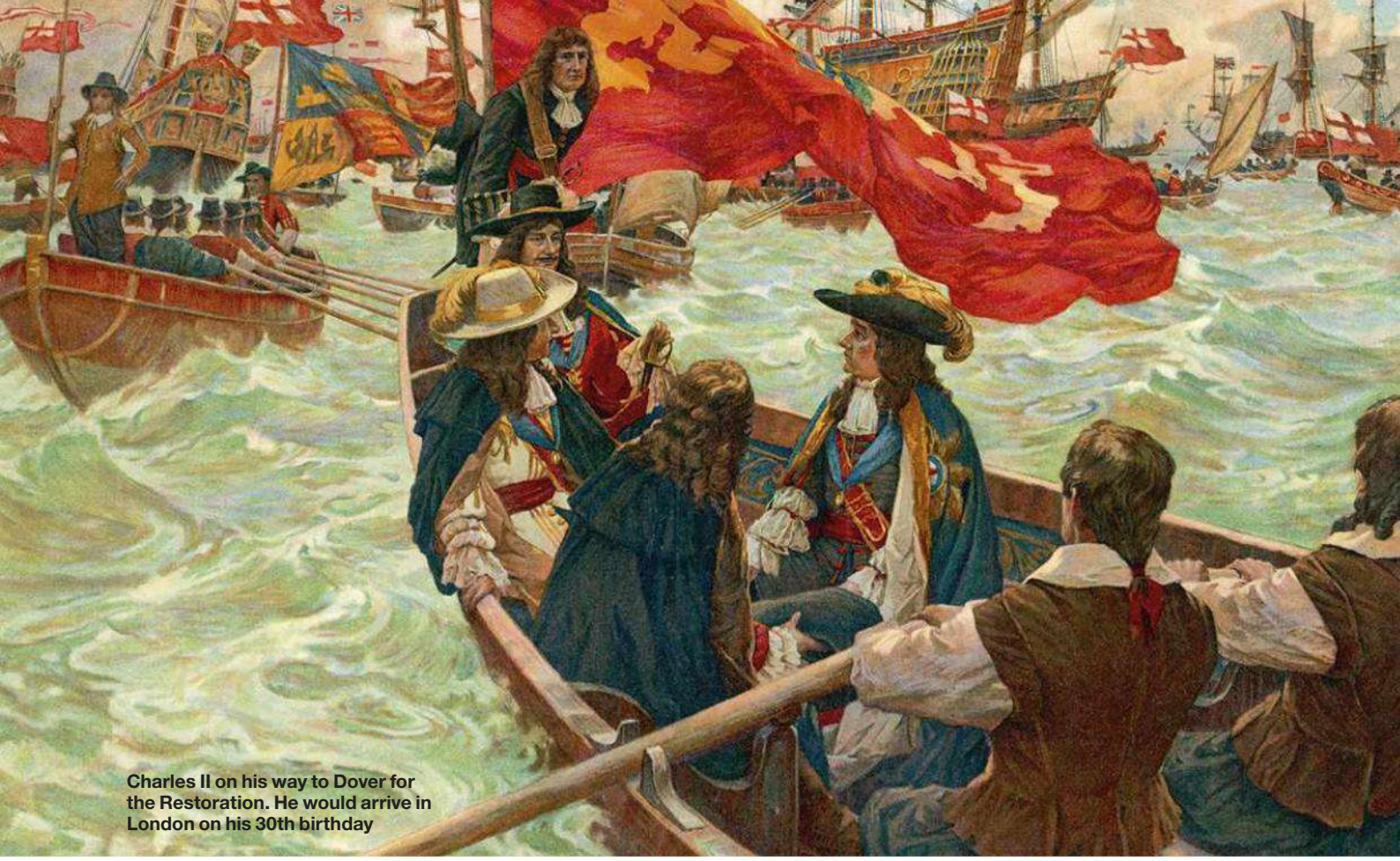
A flood of petitioners

Breda was flooded with supplicants and place-seekers, all of whom Charles received graciously. Some sought pardons; others brought gold, hoping to win his support. Once parliament's vote was known, the flood of petitioners swelled.

Charles's days of begging were over. At one point, he received a trunk with £10,000 in sovereigns. When the young king saw this, Pepys was told, he became "so joyful, that he called the Princess Royal and Duke of York to look upon it as it lay in the Portmanteau before it was taken out".

The shimmering gold was no illusion. In mid-May, Charles sailed down river to The Hague, where he received the parliamentary commissioners, and deputations from the City of London, and was feted by the Dutch Republic. Finally, on 23 May, Charles set sail for Dover in clear, breezy weather.

Two days later, crowds blackened the crest of the white cliffs of Dover to watch



Charles II on his way to Dover for the Restoration. He would arrive in London on his 30th birthday

the king land. In Canterbury Cathedral, he held his first privy council, setting the pattern for his administration, a shrewdly balanced 'team of rivals', by granting honours to Presbyterian grandees like Monck as well as royalist supporters. From here, Charles's progress to the capital was one great show. The timing was immaculate, for he entered London on 29 May, his 30th birthday.

In a dramatic set-piece, the parliamentary army, summoned by Monck, acknowledged Charles's command on Blackheath. After a tented banquet in St George's Fields, where the lord mayor presented him with the sword of the city, the king rode bareheaded over London Bridge. It took several hours to reach Whitehall through the throng.

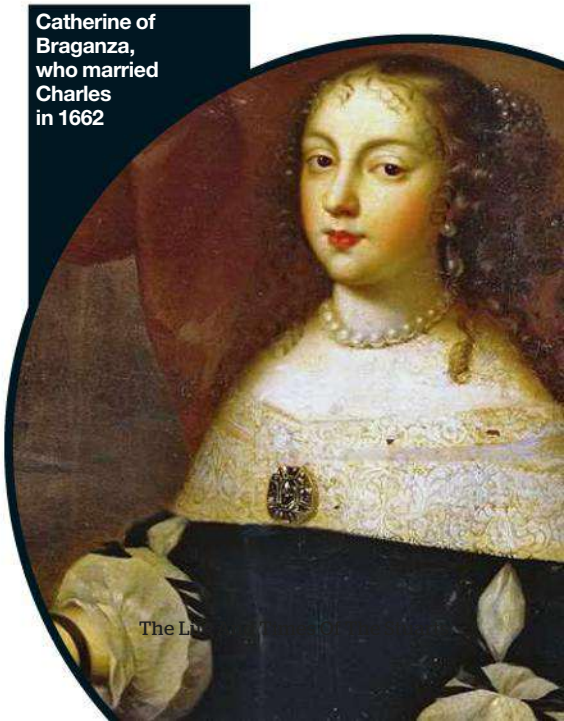
John Evelyn, a committed royalist, had tears in his eyes. "I stood in the Strand," he wrote, "& beheld it & blessed God, and all this without one drop of bloud, & by that very army, which rebell'd against him: but it was the Lord's doing, et mirabile in oculis nostris: for such a Restauration was never seene in the mention of any history, antient or modern, since the return of the Babylonian Captivity, nor so joyfull a day, & so bright, ever seene in this nation." Yet reports also mentioned that one old woman in the crowd simply spat, and shouted: "A pox on all kings!"

Despite such murmurs, Evelyn's point was good: not only had the Restoration been bloodless, but it had taken place without the intervention of a foreign power, and its agents were the king's potential enemies. It was vital, therefore, that he should quickly pay attention to fulfilling his Breda promises. The New Model Army was paid (leaving Charles sorely out of pocket) and peacefully disbanded, but other issues proved more problematic. Charles and Hyde fought the passionately royalist MPs for months to ensure that the Act of Oblivion and Indemnity, awarding pardons to those who had opposed the crown, was eventually passed.

Charles's speeches to the Commons hammered home this point, so much so that disgruntled royalists complained he was passing "an act of indemnity to his enemies and oblivion to his friends". Even the execution of leading regicides in October 1660 failed to quell the complaints, especially as Charles stopped the executions as soon as they had achieved their symbolic role.

In these early months, Charles presented himself as the 'healing king', resolved to salve the wounds of his three countries: England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. But, from the start, he was short of cash. He was the first monarch dependent on parliament for a peacetime budget and the MPs grossly underestimated the cost of running the nation. The new Cavalier parliament, elected in the spring of 1661, was fiercely partisan and because the king was at parliament's mercy with regard to money, he could not run counter to their wishes. This fatally undermined his key promise of "liberty to tender consciences".

Despite well-intentioned conferences, the religious settlement never materialised. Uprisings in London and the north fuelled the preconception that, as Charles's later minister, Halifax, put it: "It is impossible



Catherine of Braganza, who married Charles in 1662

"It was reported that an old woman in the crowd spat, and shouted: 'A pox on all kings!'"

ALAMY/MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY, DE AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES



A 1684 engraving from John Browne Basillion showing Charles II 'curing' scrofula by laying his hands on the sufferers

THE ART ARCHIVE/ALAMY



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for a Dissenter not to be a Rebel", and in 1662, convinced of the political threat, parliament passed the Act of Uniformity (making the use of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer compulsory). The Act drove many Presbyterian ministers and their followers out of the Church of England. Soon the harsh legislation of the Clarendon Code, which prevented religious meetings outside the church, meant that those whose consciences Charles had promised to honour were instead hunted down as criminals.

Meanwhile, the old hierarchy was established at court, in the counties and in the church. To reinforce this, Charles knew that it was vital that he make himself visible, to use his physical presence to charm his subjects. He worked hard to satisfy the crowds who had welcomed him in the spirit of the illusory 'good old days', with maypoles and bonfires.

He laid claim to the medieval glamour of kingship with ceremonies like Touching for the King's Evil, where the touch of the royal hand was held to cure scrofula and other diseases. As a result, sufferers flocked to him in their thousands. At the same time, appealing to the nobles rather than the mass, he revived institutions such as the Knights of the Garter.

Fully aware of the power of display, Charles spared no expenses on his coronation, held on 23 April 1661, St George's Day. The crown of St Edward and the royal regalia, melted down in the Commonwealth, were replaced at a cost of £12,000. Echoing Elizabethan practice, Charles also mounted a lavish procession through the city on Coronation Eve, to ensure the goodwill of the merchants.

In addition to the grand procession, Charles worked up his own legend, telling and retelling the story of his famous escape from Worcester, emphasising the support he received from ordinary people but also implying that he was protected by 'Providence', the word employed in Puritan tracts to suggest the directing hand of God in national affairs.

Good looks and virility

To boost his heroic yet human status, prints and descriptions of the king focused on Charles's youth, good looks and virility. Even before he landed, Samuel Tuke's *A Character of Charles II* (1660) stressed his easy, graceful motions, and his love of sport and dancing, adding:

DID CHARLES BELIEVE HIS OWN SPIN?

Following years in exile, Charles's return to England was a triumph, thanks to much hype and a new, carefully crafted image

In exile, Charles developed a mechanism for coping, in which his natural charm played a great part. He became adept at making promises that he was unable to keep. His casual manner made it difficult for his own ministers to guess his intentions; today's historians still find him hard to judge.

Beneath his easy facade lay a ruthless streak. Where his father, Charles I, and his younger brother, James, Duke of York, later James II, were stubborn men of principle, Charles was a flexible pragmatist. He was almost too intelligent and wary to give his full commitment to any individual or belief. His priorities were steadfastly political, thus some contemporaries believed that he was a Catholic from the time of his exile. But those closest to him saw a man uninterested in dogma, reluctant to persecute anyone for their beliefs but quite ready to do so if they posed a threat.

He does seem to have believed his spin about becoming the 'healing king'. While he envied the absolute power of Louis XIV, he genuinely hoped to work with parliament to achieve stability.

Yet he had no qualms about sacrificing ministers when the public demanded a scapegoat, or about arranging a secret treaty with Louis XIV of France to attack the Dutch Republic. Gradually his policy of access was replaced by greater remoteness. But he maintained a brilliant balancing act, retaining the image of the 'merry Monarch' while pursuing policies in which loyalty to the Stuart family overrode any wider national interests.



"Charles set out to show the people that he was bringing Britain into the modern age, creating a culture to rival the continent"

"To the gracefulness of his deportment may be joined his easiness of access, his patience in attention and the gentleness both in the tune and style of his speech; so that those whom either the veneration for his dignity or the majesty of his presence have put into an awful respect are reassured as soon as he enters into a conversation".

With his alert sense of theatre, Charles played up to this role. Initially he sought to deflate opposition by giving people access, in place of his father's cold, formal distance. His subjects could indeed watch him swimming, playing tennis and sailing his Dutch yachts on the Thames. But he also set out to show the people that he was bringing Britain into the modern age, creating a culture to rival the continent. In November 1660, he granted an exclusive patent to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant to build two playhouses and create new theatrical companies, the King's Company and the Duke's Company – and, for the first time, women appeared on the professional stage, as in continental theatres.

Charles also fostered a new spirit by his patronage of the Royal Society. This chimed with his personal interests, since in exile he had followed the new developments in mathematics, chemistry, telescopes and clock-making. The king cherished his connection with the Society's ethos, established by Robert Boyle, of putting a common interest above partisan loyalties (though he hoped for more practical outcomes, to boost trade and industry, too).

Ultimately Charles's attempt to work with parliament failed. He and his ministers in the privy cabinet were roundly taken to account, for example, after the Dutch War of 1665–7, when blame was placed firmly on ministerial incompetence and on the extravagance and licentiousness of the court.

But at the Restoration his 'spin' had been so cleverly orchestrated, appealing to so many different groups, that Charles could, in moments of crisis, always appeal beyond parliament to the nation. His charismatic personality, as well as his policies, ensured his survival on the throne. H

Jenny Uglow is an award-winning biographer. She is the author of *A Gambling Man: Charles II and the Restoration* (Faber, 2009)

THE REIGN OF AN ARCH-PRAGMATIST

May 1660
Charles's arrival in London wins over potential opponents through a combination of **grandeur and humility**

September 1666
With genuine courage, the king personally supervises the fight against **the Fire of London**, capitalising on public praise to offset bad press for leaving London during the Plague

November 1667
After a Dutch raid on the Medway, carrying off the royal flagship, Charles caves in to **pressure by driving Clarendon**, his advisor for 20 years, into exile

May 1670
Through his sister Minette, Charles arranges a **secret agreement with Louis XIV to support France against the Dutch** (then Britain's allies)

March 1672
With the threat of bankruptcy, Charles suspends exchequer repayments, and issues a **Declaration of Indulgence**, chiefly to win dissenting London merchants. When parliament refuses funds for the third Dutch War, Charles **withdraws the declaration and agrees to the Test Act,** requiring Catholic office-holders to renounce their posts

August 1678
Charles discounts Titus Oates's claims of a Catholic plot to kill him but fails to intervene to stop the ensuing 'Popish Plot' hysteria. He increasingly dissolves parliaments keen to pass an Exclusion Bill to exclude Catholics from the throne, namely his brother, James

1680
Charles combats the Earl of Shaftesbury's campaign to make his illegitimate Protestant son, James, Duke of Monmouth, his heir, by temporarily banishing James. **In March 1681 he dramatically dissolves parliament at Oxford.** Shaftesbury is sent to the Tower and his movement is crushed. From now until his death in February 1685, Charles rules without parliament

Paper talk

Andrew Green explains how a newspaper published in 1660 paved the way for Charles II's return from exile

Over its many Radio 4 series, Peter Snow's *Random Edition* has explored stories of all kinds found in newspapers, dating as far back as the 1650s. A *Parliamentary Intelligencer* newspaper (or 'newsbook') from the spring of 1660 is the subject of one programme focused on the Restoration of Charles II to the throne. On its pages we see the work of some of the very first professional journalists in Britain. Yet there's no sophisticated computer page-setting here – the news tumbles onto the printer's tray as it arrives.

Somehow, that very rough-and-readiness helps give the events a particular authenticity, even if the slant of the paper (printed by John Macock and Tho. Newcomb) is clearly royalist.

The key scene reported is the appearance before both Houses of Parliament of Sir John Grenville, who had just arrived from Breda in the Netherlands, Charles's continental home after a decade in exile.

The House being informed that Sir John Greenvil [sic], a Messenger from the King, was at the dore, it was resolved that he be called in, who being called in accordingly, at the Bar after obeisance made, said, "Mr Speaker, I am commanded by The King my Master, to deliver this Letter to you, and his desire is that you will communicate it to the House".

Enclosed within the letter was Charles's 'Declaration of Breda', offering guarantees should he be restored as king: a "free general pardon" for (almost) all those deemed to have offended against the monarchy; freedom of religious expression ("liberty to tender consciences"); payment of army arrears; and a *modus operandi* for dealing with all property claims.

Random Edition contributor John Morrill of Selwyn College, Cambridge, says: "Grenville's handing over of the declaration is the moment when the members of a newly elected parliament, having had no idea how the chaos of the years since the killing of Charles I was to be resolved, see that suddenly an answer is available. They grab that moment and declare Charles king."

With parliamentary motions for the Restoration carried, the *Intelligencer* takes us onto the streets of London:

…the people throughout the whole city and suburbs… this day made bonfires everywhere and the Bells were generally rung, and the great Guns went off at the Tower.

"Enclosed within the letter was Charles II's **'Declaration of Breda'**, offering guarantees should he be restored as king including a **'free general pardon'** and freedom of religious expression"

Elsewhere we read of the enthusiasm of the navy stationed at Deal in Kent, via letters sent from the flagship, Naseby, which was about to undergo a major refit for its journey to bring Charles home as king.

Then might you see the Fleet in her Pride with Pendants loose, Guns roaring, Caps flying and loud *Vive le Roye* received from one ship's company to another.

Military opposition

However, despite the political leanings of the *Intelligencer*, clues on its pages point to the fact that at least one major military figure utterly opposed to the Restoration had been willing to take up arms to defend republicanism. A dispatch from Hereford states that:

Lambert's party are all dispersed in these parts, there is onely a nest of them left in Red Castle [probably in Shropshire].

The man referred to here is General John Lambert, one of the outstanding military leaders of the period, but at odds with fellow general George Monck over high politics. The latter's forces had swept those of Lambert aside earlier in 1660, allowing Monck to set in motion the sequence of events that were to lead to the Restoration. Lambert, meanwhile, went to the Tower, from which he nonetheless escaped, thereafter rallying republican sympathisers to take up arms at Edgehill, symbolic site of the first great battle of the Civil War.

Alas, most of Lambert's supporters preferred to stand on the sidelines for the moment, rather than risk their lives in



Jacobus Houbraken's engraving of General John Lambert, whose utter opposition to the Restoration saw him spend the last 20 years of his life a prisoner

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

battle at Daventry (where the opposing forces finally clashed).

"Only 350 troops turn up to support Lambert," says Lambert's biographer, David Farr. "They're vastly outnumbered by government troops. Lambert's forces disintegrate. The story is that Lambert's fine Arabian steed gets bogged down in the muddy ground, and he's easily rounded up." Lambert was to spend the rest of his days a prisoner.

Other reports in the *Intelligencer* reveal that the new administration's words weren't always matched by its actions:

The House ordered the thanks of this House to be given to Mr Calamy… and Mr Baxter for their great pains in carrying on the works of preaching and praying before the House at St Margaret's Westminster.

Edmund Calamy and Richard Baxter were leading Presbyterian members of the reformed Anglican church, Puritans devoted to preaching and scripture, while loathing bishops, cathedrals and ceremony. The cruel irony is that their subsequent stories reveal the fragility of Charles II's promises of "liberty to tender consciences".

"That statement in the Declaration of Breda wasn't worth the paper it was written on," says Restoration historian Ronald Hutton. "Most of the nation was tired of Puritanism. A thoroughly intolerant new House of Commons was to outlaw all forms of religion that weren't High Anglican. Calamy and Baxter attempted to carry on preaching, but ended up in prison as a result."

Pragmatic prison sentences

There was more pragmatism in the Restoration regime's treatment of the regicides – men who had signed the death warrant of Charles I. One of them, Sir Hardress Waller, turns up on the pages of the Intelligencer. Having until now been engaged in "managing the affairs of Ireland" he is reported as having…

…the leave of the Council [of State] to follow his private occasions, provided he shall appear before the Council when they shall desire the same.

In fact, Waller fled to France before surrendering in the hope that repentance would save his head (and guts). Though condemned to death, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

The treatment of the regicides wasn't uniformly savage, says Penelope Corfield of Royal Holloway, University of London, even if the executions that were effected proved indescribably gory. "The general idea was to encourage the bitterness of divisive civil war to die down. If individual regicides were ready to express regret and play within the system in future, they didn't suffer the extreme penalty. The authorities only went after the regicides that fled or wouldn't accept the authority of the king as restored. Amazingly, one plan suggested for Charles while he was in exile was that he should marry the daughter of John Lambert, the stalwart of the republican cause!"

Weighty issues, then, at a dramatic and hugely significant turning point in British history. However, the great thing about newspapers is that there are usually unobtrusive corners that show life going on as normal even in stirring times. In the Intelligencer, the ads say it all. How's this – all you master chefs – for a cookbook surely worth restoring to favour:

***The Accomplisht Cook, the Mystery of the Whole Art of Cookery*, revealed in a more perfect method than hath been publisht in any language; expert and ready ways for dressing Flesh, Fish and Fowl… with other a la mode curiosities … approved by the many years experience of Robert May.** H

Andrew Green was producer of *Random Edition* on BBC Radio 4, in which the stories were taken from archive newspapers

THE EXILED KING

After he was deposed during the Glorious Revolution, there was a lengthy struggle to return James II to the throne. **Tracy Borman** explores the rise of Jacobitism

The 'Merry Monarch', Charles II, had done much to restore the popularity of the royal family after the bitter years of civil war. But though his many mistresses had produced numerous children, his marriage to Catherine Braganza had produced no heirs. Upon his death in 1685, therefore, the throne passed to his younger brother, James.

James II presented a stark contrast to his pleasure-loving brother. Serious and driven, he was also stubborn and headstrong. Although he won respect as a soldier and naval commander, his dogmatic nature soon caused serious ructions within the new kingdom.

Whereas Charles had adopted the same religious toleration that had served Elizabeth I so well, James was determined that his subjects should adhere to the uncompromising Catholic beliefs that he himself cherished. Worse still, he failed to appreciate just how fragile support for the newly restored monarchy was, and from the very beginning of his reign, he adopted dangerously absolutist policies.

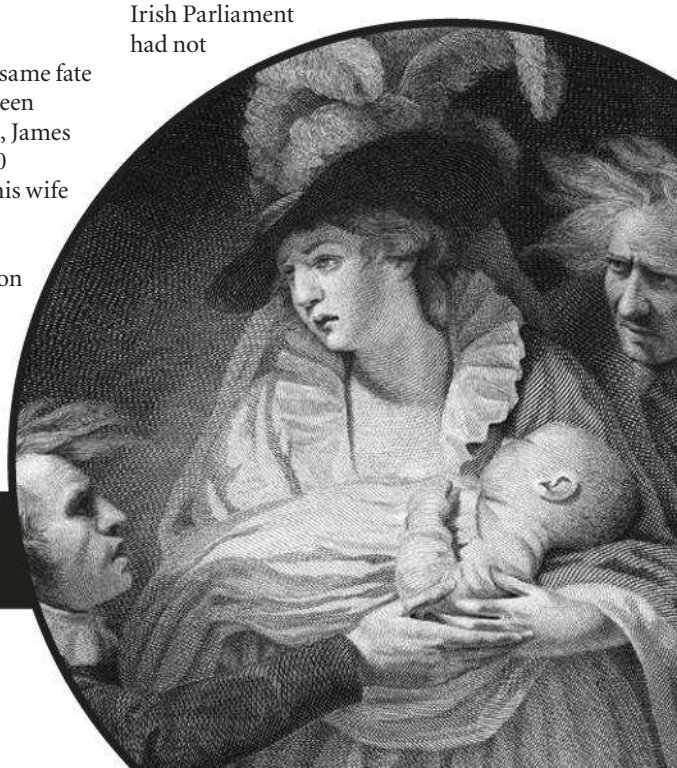
Charles II had prophesied that his brother would be king for no more than three years. James paid little heed to it, but opposition to his rule gathered ground both at home and abroad. Matters came to a head in June 1688 when James's second wife, Mary of Modena, gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward Stuart. Until then, James's eldest daughter from his first marriage, Mary, had been the heir presumptive. A Protestant and the wife of William of Orange, Mary had offered a glimmer of hope for all the opponents of James's increasingly dogmatic regime. Now that he had a son, who would be raised in the Catholic faith, their hopes were dashed.

Spurred to action, parliament invited Mary and her husband, William of Orange, to invade England and claim the throne. The 'Glorious Revolution' that followed was a bloodless coup in which James was ousted from the throne and replaced by his Protestant daughter and son-in-law, who were crowned Mary II and William III.

Foiled escape

Believing that he would meet the same fate as his father, Charles I, who had been executed by the parliamentarians, James resolved to flee the country. On 10 December 1688, he arranged for his wife to leave Whitehall disguised as a laundry woman, taking their son with her. James himself left London the next day, throwing the Great Seal (the seal that shows the sovereign's approval of state documents) into the Thames on the way. But he suffered the humiliation of being captured by fishermen off the Kent coast and was brought back to London. There he received a rapturous welcome and seems to have considered making a stand against William and Mary. But the new king was too quick for him: he had already garrisoned the capital and seized Whitehall. James was ordered to leave London and, on 23 December, he was allowed to escape to France.

Although William and Mary had taken the throne without contest, James and his heirs would inspire a romantic loyalty for many years to come. It was not long before the deposed king sought to capitalise upon this. In March 1689, James landed in Ireland with the help of French troops. The Irish Parliament had not



Mary of Modena, wife of James II and VI, flees to France with her infant son James Francis

GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY



James II and VII was king of England from 1685-1688 before he was forced into exile. But the former king never gave up hope of reclaiming his throne



The battle of the Boyne: William of Orange claimed the throne from James II who then fled to France

followed the example of its counterpart in London. Rather, it had declared that James was still king and had passed a bill of attainder against all those who had 'rebelled' against him.

The following month, support for his cause also materialised in Scotland, when John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, raised James's standard in the heart of Dundee. At first, Viscount Dundee struggled to raise many supporters but, bolstered by the arrival of 300 Irish troops, his army attracted a growing number of soldiers from Scottish clans, particularly in the Highlands. On 27 July, the by-now-considerable Jacobite army routed William's men at the battle of Killiecrankie, slaughtering about 2,000 men.

But William was quick to muster more forces and, during the months that followed, he reclaimed the initiative. Meanwhile, James's army was decisively beaten by royal forces at the battle of the Boyne in July 1690. News of this prompted the remaining Scottish support to collapse, and William obliged the Jacobite rebels there to swear allegiance to him two years later. Meanwhile, James had returned to France in disgrace, leaving behind him scores of disgruntled Irish supporters, who never forgave him for deserting them.

The good life

James enjoyed a life of luxury in France, thanks to the generosity of King Louis XIV, who always had an eye for causing trouble for his English rival. James and his family were offered the royal château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye as their principal residence, where a number of their supporters and fellow exiles stayed with them.

Meanwhile in England, events had taken a turn in James's favour. The premature death of James's daughter Mary in 1694 seriously undermined the credibility of her husband's rule. Their subjects had willingly accepted Mary as a true Stuart queen, but their natural xenophobia had always made them distrustful of William, whom they variously nicknamed as 'Rotten Orange', 'Hook Nose' and 'The Little Spark'. James and his French patron Louis celebrated when they heard the news, believing that William could not survive for long.

It seemed that their hopes would be realised when, two years later, a body of 'Jacobites' (as James's supporters became known, after the Latin for James) attempted to assassinate William III and restore James to the throne. But the plot failed miserably and did more harm than good to the cause of the 'king over the water'. Later, in 1696, Louis XIV offered to have James elected king of Poland. But James refused to accept on the grounds that it might lead his English subjects to believe that he was no longer eligible to be their king too. The French king concluded a peace with William the following year. Although he was still content for James to shelter in his kingdom, it was clear that the deposed king could expect no further support from him in future.

During his final years, James lived a life of austerity and, apparently, penitence at his home in France. He had not altogether relinquished hopes of regaining the throne for his son, however, for he wrote James Francis Edward Stuart a memorandum on how to govern England. It was a gesture that owed more to optimism than to realism.

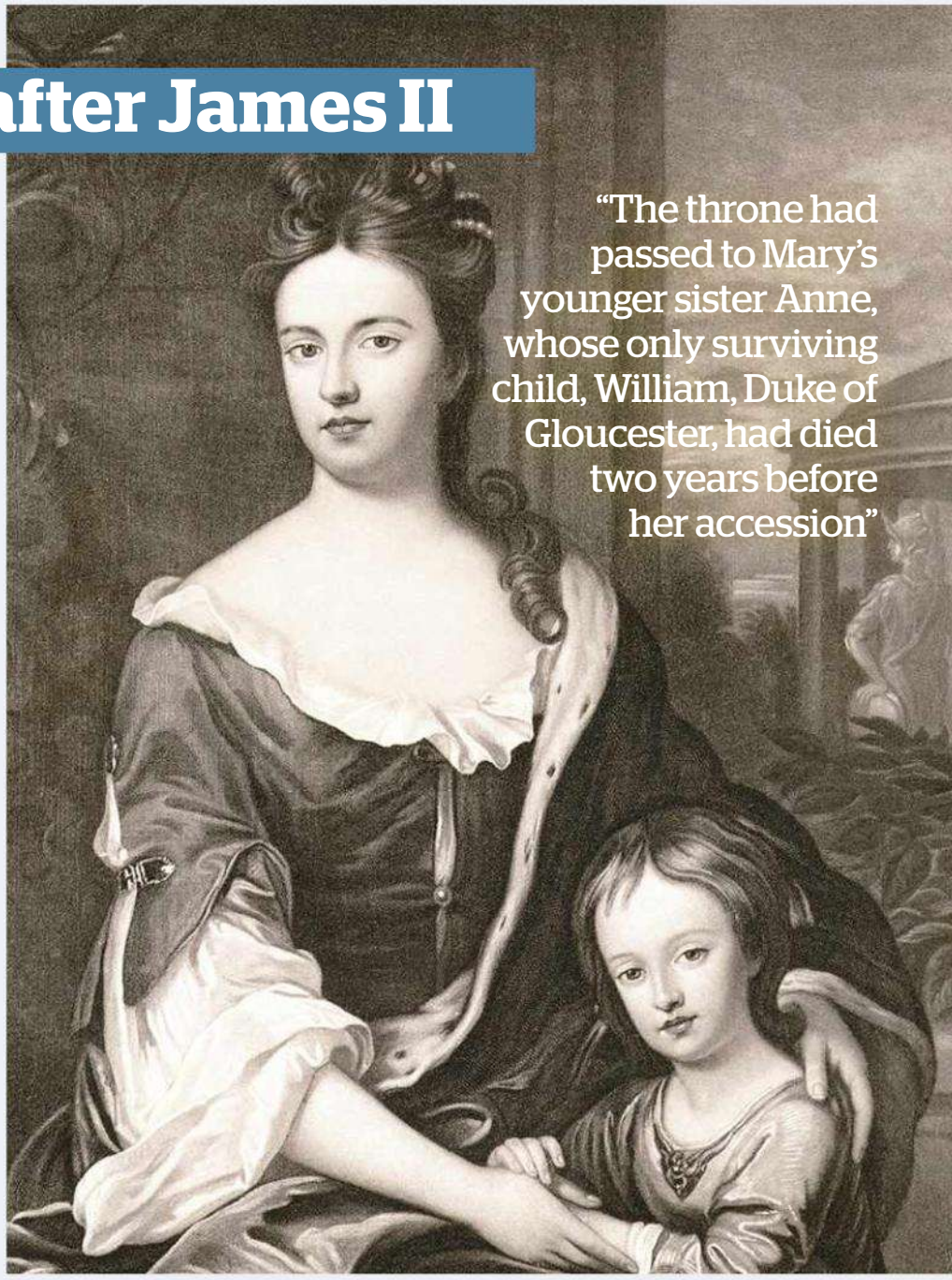
James II died of a brain haemorrhage on 16 September 1701 at the French palace that had been his home for the past 11 years. The man who supplanted him as king, William III, survived him only by a little under six months. H

Tracy Borman is an author and historian. Her latest book, *Thomas Cromwell*, is published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2014

"Although William and Mary had taken the throne without contest, James and his heirs would inspire a romantic loyalty for many years to come"

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Jacobitism after James II



"The throne had passed to Mary's younger sister Anne, whose only surviving child, William, Duke of Gloucester, had died two years before her accession"

Far from being extinguished by the death of James II, the Jacobite cause seemed to have been given fresh impetus. Its focus now was James's only surviving legitimate son, James Francis Edward Stuart. His supporters proclaimed him James III of England and Ireland, and James VIII of Scotland. He was also formally recognised as such by Louis XIV and Pope Clement XI. James later became known as 'the Old Pretender' to distinguish him from his son, Charles Edward Stuart, 'the Young Pretender'.

The fact that William and Mary had died without direct heirs bolstered the Jacobite movement. Moreover, the throne had passed to Mary's younger sister, Anne, whose only surviving child, William, Duke of Gloucester, had died nearly two years before her accession. Her most likely successor was George Louis, prince-elector of Hanover, whose mother Sophia was a granddaughter of James I and VI. The Jacobite faction therefore offered the enticing prospect to Anne's subjects of placing a British, rather than a German-born, king on the throne.

In 1708, the Old Pretender garnered considerable French support for an invasion of Britain. Together with 4,000 French troops and around 30 ships from the French navy, he sailed for the Firth of Forth but was intercepted by the Royal Navy and forced to make an ignominious retreat.

It was not until 1715, by which time Anne was dead and George Louis had been crowned George I, that the next serious Jacobite invasion attempt was launched. Even the new king's own mother acknowledged the Old Pretender as Prince of Wales, while the anti-Hanoverian feeling ran particularly high among the disgruntled Scots, who saw little advantage of the union with England. Although the English Jacobites were soon rounded up, the Scots posed a much more dangerous threat. In November 1715, the Earl of Mar led thousands of Highlanders into battle with 'German George's' troops. Although the English were outnumbered, they won the day; even the arrival of the Old Pretender himself in December failed to rouse Mar's troops to victory, and he and the Earl were obliged to retreat to France.

For the remainder of George's reign, he was dogged by Jacobite plots, spies and traitors, and could never feel truly secure on his throne – neither could his son and successor, George II. By far the most serious threat to his reign came in 1744, when Louis XV of France lent his support for a large-scale invasion of England. This time it was led by the Young Pretender, Charles (also known as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'), who had been in exile in Rome with his father but who now rushed to France to join the preparations. A fleet of barges had begun embarking 10,000 troops from the French coast when a storm wreaked havoc, sinking many of the ships with the loss of all on board.

Undeterred, Charles whipped up support for a new invasion, and in July 1745 he succeeded in reaching Scottish soil. More and more Scots rallied to his cause and, with many British troops fighting abroad in the War of the Austrian Succession, the chances of restoring the Stuarts to the throne seemed stronger than ever. Charles and his growing army marched south to England and, by December 1745, they had reached Derby. But conflict between Charles and his fellow commander, Lord George Murray, weakened their attack and they were soon driven northwards by the king's troops.

Although the Jacobites succeeded in taking Falkirk in January 1746, British forces – led by George II's younger son, William, Duke of Cumberland – gained the initiative and won a crushing victory at Culloden on 16 April 1746. The Hanoverian dynasty was now accepted by the people of Great Britain, laying the foundations for the kingdom's emergence as a European and world power. *Tracy Borman*

CORBIS/MICHAEL NICHOLSON

A NOT SO BLOODLESS REVOLUTION

History describes the overthrow of James II and VII by William of Orange as peaceful. But **Edward Vallance** explains how bloodshed was an integral part

On 5 November 1688, the Dutch Stadtholder (governor), the Protestant William, Prince of Orange, landed in Brixham, Devon, with an invasion fleet four times the size of the Spanish Armada a hundred years earlier.

With his sizeable army, William began to march upon London. His father-in-law James II and VII went to meet him but, in spite of having a larger force, lost his nerve for battle. Debilitated by incessant nosebleeds that laid him up for days and shaken by defections from his officer ranks, James avoided confrontation. Fearing for his own and his family's safety, the king tried to flee the country on 11 December but was captured in Kent. A few days later he managed to escape to France. In just a few weeks, a foreign power had, in effect, succeeded in invading England for the first time in 600 years.

However, William was here by invitation. He owed his swift progress to a request he had received six months before. In June 1688, seven English peers, opposed to the policies of King James, had written to the Stadtholder asking for his assistance – to help them overturn their monarch's pro-Catholic policies. And as William's forces advanced upon London, many of James's officers defected to the Protestant prince.

As James fled, he apparently threw the Great Seal of the Realm into the Thames. With the throne vacant and unrest in the city, the government was temporarily placed in the hands of the Prince of Orange, and a convention of peers and MPs was summoned to decide how to settle the kingdom. On 13 February 1689, William and his English wife Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II and VII, were crowned William III and Mary II, joint monarchs of England. As well, they were tendered a document called the Declaration of Rights which listed the country's grievances. They accepted the Scottish throne a few weeks later (where he was styled William II).



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This contemporary illustration shows the Duke of Monmouth, Charles II's illegitimate son, being executed

Defenders of the constitution

By the 18th century, these events had come to be known as the Glorious, or Bloodless, Revolution. The events of 1688–9 became



By invitation only: William and Mary came at the request of English peers – and ended up on the throne



A 19th-century painting by Edward Ward dramatises the moment when the news of William's arrival in Devon is broken to King James

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

the cornerstone of the Whig interpretation of English history. According to this tradition, the members of the Convention parliament who voted the crown to William and Mary were not constitutional innovators, but defenders of England's "ancient constitution" (the body of fundamental laws which were held to guarantee the rights and liberties of the English) from the absolutist designs of James.

In the words of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), the revolutionaries "regenerated the deficient part of the old constitution through the parts which were not impaired". In contrast to the violence and terror engulfing revolutionary France at the time that Burke was writing, this earlier English revolution was "glorious" because it was carried out by parliament. Above all, 1688–9 was to be celebrated because it was, according to the Whig interpretation, a bloodless revolution. The emphasis on the peaceful nature of the revolution was not only a result of a wish to contrast it with violent revolutions in continental Europe, but also out of need to present 1688–9 as a pivotal point in a story of national political self-determination. As GM Trevelyan rather sheepishly admitted in his *History of England* (1926), there was "a certain ignominy in the fact that a foreign fleet and army… had been required to enable Englishmen to recover the liberties they had muddled away in their frantic faction feuds".

> "The claim of a bloodless Revolution has remained unchallenged. It is time that this piece of 'Whig smuggery' is put to rest"

Recent historians have questioned the optimistic outlook of the Whig account, with its description of a steady movement towards parliamentary democracy. Instead, they have presented the revolution as little more than a dynastic usurpation, in the words of Blair Worden, "a swift aristocratic coup". According to these historians, the revolution changed very little in constitutional terms as the Declaration of Rights was a largely toothless legal instrument. They have pointed to the outbreak of post-revolutionary wars in Scotland and Ireland between 1690 and 1692 as evidence that the consequences of 1688–9 were also less than "glorious" (see box on p101). Historian Jonathan Israel has stressed the importance of the military dimension to the revolution, arguing that events were not only shaped by William III and the Convention parliament, but also by the presence of a large occupying army of Dutch soldiers in London.

However, the claim that the revolution was essentially bloodless has remained unchallenged. It is time this last piece of "Whig smuggery" (as one historian has aptly described it) is put to rest. As recent historians have correctly argued, the revolution was one important stage in a protracted and messy struggle over the succession to the throne, which continued, with the Jacobite revolts of 1715 and 1745, into the 18th century. The issue was whether hereditary succession should be followed, allowing James's Catholic heirs to inherit the crown or whether lineal descent should be ignored in favour of a Protestant monarch.

The roots of the Revolution

Accounts of the Revolution of 1688–9 should begin in the 1670s, when James's conversion to Catholicism became public knowledge. Anxieties about the rise of arbitrary government and the destruction of the Protestant religion under a "popish" monarch led to the turmoil of the Exclusion Crisis of 1678–81, when Whig politicians, scared by rumours of a "popish plot", attempted by legislative means to bar James from becoming king.

The plot was the fabrication of the former Catholic convert Titus Oates. But





William of Orange lands in Brixham in 1688 with an estimated army of 21,000 Dutch troops

the paranoia aroused by the threat of Catholic insurrection, inflamed by the supposed murder of the magistrate Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey by popish assassins, led to the deaths of over 40 individuals, either executed, dying in prison or as from violent assaults. This number included high-profiles figures such as Edward Coleman, the Duke of York's secretary, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. Outside of the capital, the plot initiated what was virtually a pogrom against Roman Catholic priests. The nonconformist minister Philip Henry reported that two priests were hung, drawn and quartered, one at Denbigh and one at Chester "as were several others in other counties".

Parliamentary schemes to prevent James from inheriting the throne were defeated by Charles II's snap dissolution of the Oxford parliament in 1681. The failure of "Exclusion" led some to take more desperate measures. In June 1685, shortly after the succession to the throne of his uncle James, Charles II's eldest illegitimate son, the exiled Duke of Monmouth, returned to England to lead an armed rebellion to seize the crown from the Catholic king. The Duke's army, mainly made up of poor labourers, cloth workers and farmhands, was routed on the night of 5-6 July by the king's professional forces at the battle of Sedgemoor. Perhaps as much as a third of Monmouth's 3,500-strong army may have been slaughtered in the

INGLORIOUS AND BLOODY

Revolutionary violence spread throughout Scotland and Ireland

In Ireland and Scotland, the Revolution was militarily contested and its settlements politically and religiously divisive. This was a reflection of the low priority given to Scottish and Irish affairs by both James and William: England was the main prize in the struggle. For James II and VII, Catholic Ireland and highland Scotland were "launching pads" for an invasion of England. For William, Jacobite rebellion, a distraction from the continental war with Louis XIV, had to be suppressed. James's personal involvement in the conflict ended with William's victory at the battle of the Boyne on I July 1690, but war in Ireland continued until capitulation of the besieged Jacobites at Limerick on 3 October 1691. Irish Protestants disregarded the peace terms of the Treaty of Limerick and established a monopoly over land ownership and political power. In Scotland, Jacobite victory at Killiecrankie on 27 July 1689 was followed by military defeats, until peace was agreed at Achallader in June 1691. Yet bloodshed continued with the Campbells' slaughter of MacDonalds at Glencoe on 13 February 1692, on the pretext that they had not taken the required oath to William.



William III leading his army to victory over King James in the battle of the Boyne

ALAMY X2

KEY PLAYERS: Who's who in the Glorious Revolution



James II and VII

James was a devout Catholic, but he did not wish to see Catholicism restored by force, seeking instead to gain for his co-religionists the same rights enjoyed by members of the Church of England. However, the questionable legality of his actions and his authoritarian style convinced many he wished to destroy Protestantism.



William III

William, the Dutch Stadtholder since 1672, was an astute politician and experienced general. His greatest preoccupation was the military struggle with Louis XIV. In 1688, William saw an opportunity to gain English support in this conflict, although initially he only wanted to engineer an anti-French Parliament, not take the throne.



Mary II

Mary, King James's daughter by his first wife, Anne Hyde – and heir to the throne before the birth of James's son in 1688 – sided with her husband rather than her father in the Revolution. She made her choice not only on her deep devotion to William and Protestantism, but also upon her conviction that King James's son, James Francis, was not really his child.



Duke of Monmouth

Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II, was touted as a successor to the crown by those in favour of excluding James, Duke of York (later James II and VII), from the throne. His dissolute personal life made him a poor Protestant champion, but his youth and courage helped win him a popular following. His hopes were crushed at the battle of Sedgemoor.



John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough

Churchill rose through the ranks in the army of James. His loyalty to the king was compromised by a commitment to Protestantism and the influence of his Whiggish wife Sarah. His defection to William on 24 November 1688 was a bitter blow to James.

battle. A further 50 or so rebels were executed without trial in its immediate aftermath. During the toasts following a raucous dinner party, one of the king's officers, Colonel Percy Kirke, "ordered several prisoners at Taunton to be hanged up; as every new health was drunk, he had a fresh man turned off; and observing how they shaked their legs in the agonies of death, he called it dancing, and ordered music to play to them".

Monmouth himself was condemned to death without trial, via the device of a bill of attainder. It took five blows from the executioner's axe to severe the Duke's head from his body. Approximately 250 rebels were sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered in the so-called Bloody Assizes. The salted, boiled and tarred quarters of executed rebels were hung up in towns across the south-west as grisly reminders of the penalties for treason, turning the region, in the words of one historian into a "vast anatomical museum". A further 850 men were sentenced at the assizes to transportation, mainly to the West Indies. One of those transported to the Caribbean was the physician Henry Pitman. He escaped back to England after a Crusoe-esque adventure in which he had been marooned on a desert island with his own Man Friday, a Carib Indian, before he was rescued and eventually taken home by a privateer ship in need of his medical skills.

The birth of King James's son, James Francis, on 10 June 1688, raised the prospect of England being ruled by a long line of Catholic monarchs. With domestic rebellion being so easily crushed, this catastrophe could only be averted by the intervention of a foreign Protestant power, the Netherlands. James had exploited public fears concerning national security in the aftermath of the Monmouth rebellion to strengthen his permanent army. The king's increased military power meant it would take a big force to challenge him. Although estimates vary, the number of troops the prince brought over may have been as many as 21,000. With William's landing at Brixham on 5 November, England was effectively in a state of war.

Violence and anarchy

Although James's loss of nerve at Salisbury on 23 November 1688, when he decided not to engage the prince's army, meant that there were no major battles in England, there were violent clashes in the winter of 1688. Lord Lovelace, a radical Whig peer, leading a force of cavalry to join up with the prince at Exeter, was captured and two of his men killed in a bloody skirmish at

ALAMY X 3, DE AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

"In Ireland, the bloody shockwaves of 1688 would be felt right up to the present day"

Cirencester with the Duke of Beaufort's militia. On 7 December at Reading, as William's forces moved towards London, an advance guard of the prince's army some 250 men strong ran into a troop of 600 Irish dragoon, leading to over 50 fatalities.

The disbanding of James's army in the winter of 1688 paradoxically heightened, rather than soothed, public anxiety. The first abortive flight of the king from England on 11 December 1688 saw the city descend into near anarchy. On the morning of 13 December, London was gripped by the rumour that James's disbanded Irish soldiers would cast off law and discipline and begin a general slaughter of the Protestant population.

The Irish Fright, as it came to be known, spread rapidly across the country. Rumours of Irish risings broke out in Norfolk on the 13th and 14th of the month, and in Surrey on the 14th and 15th. By 15 December, the news had reached Yorkshire. The antiquary Ralph Thoresby reported that in Leeds there were reports that nearby Beeston was burning, leading to a flight from the city. However, Thoresby's pregnant wife coolly climbed to the attic window to report that Beeston was untouched.

Violence, both real and imagined, was then an integral part of the Revolution. Only if the immediate causes of those events are falsely restricted to the last two years of King James's reign can it be presented as largely bloodless. Between 1678 and the Glorious Revolution, the casualties of the dynastic struggle in England alone numbered in the thousands. In Scotland and Ireland, the human costs were even higher. Moreover, the exclusively Protestant nature of the revolution settlement in Ireland would ensure that the bloody shockwaves of 1688-9 would be felt right up to the present day. H

Edward Vallance is reader in early modern history at Roehampton University. He is the author of *The Glorious Revolution: 1688 – Britain's Fight for Liberty* (Abacus, 2007)



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William and Mary at the Bill of Rights, prior to their coronation. The bill invited them to become joint sovereigns of England

A STRONGER PARLIAMENT

The lasting impact of the revolution

The Declaration of Rights, tendered to William and Mary on their coronation (and which would have an important influence on the US Constitution's second and eighth amendments), was a symbolically important statement of principle that lacked legal machinery to back it up. For example, the demand for regular parliaments was not secured until the passage of the Triennial Act in 1694. But if the Revolution did not represent the advent of parliamentary "democracy", it certainly ushered in parliamentary government.

Needing regular parliamentary subsidies to fund his war against France, William conceded greater and greater control to the two houses over government expenditure. Parliamentary commissions of accounts were created which routed out corruption and waste. The need to pay for the war led to the creation of new financial institutions such as the Bank of England, founded in 1694.

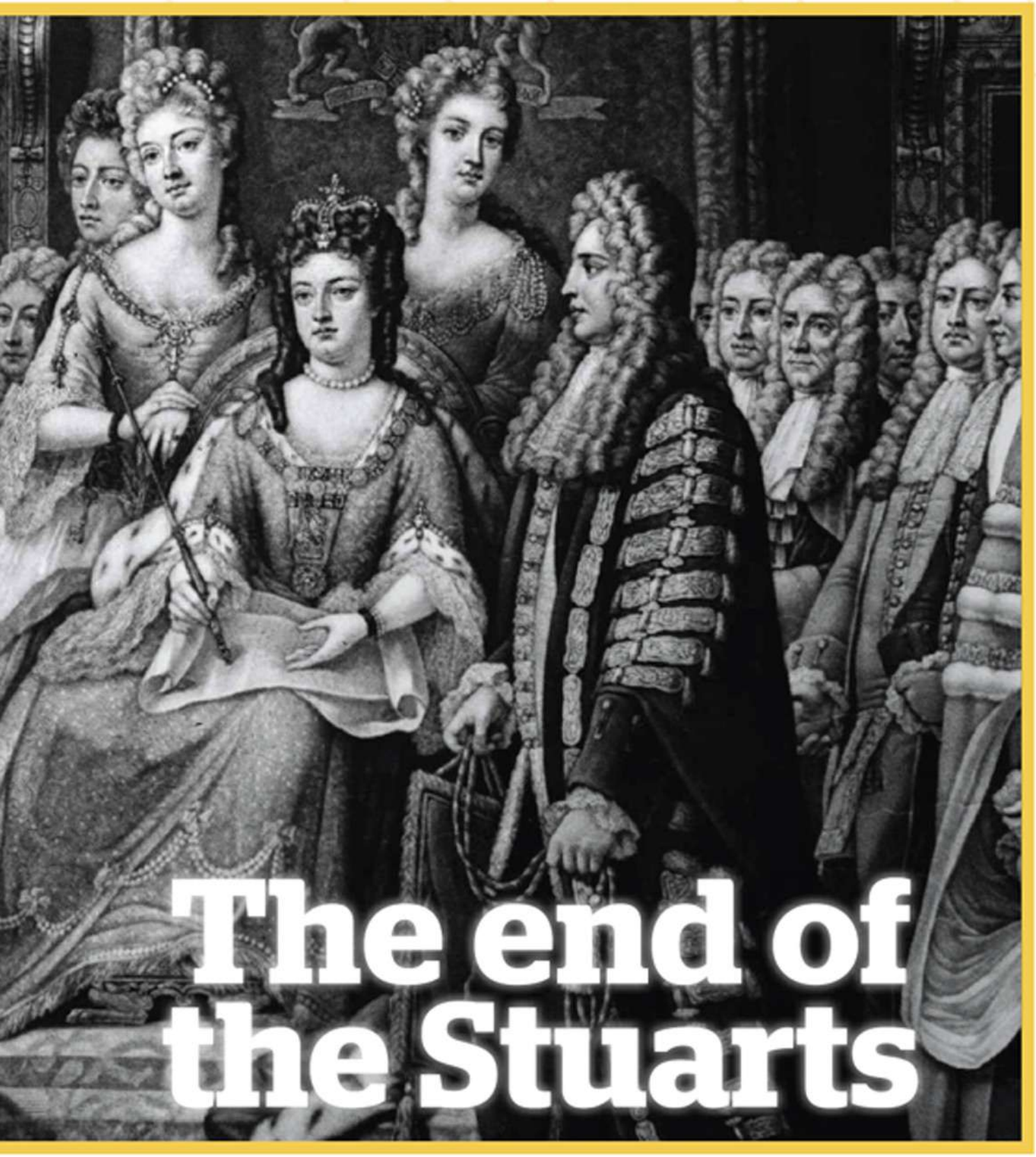
The Revolution also clipped the monarch's wings; the 1701 Act of Settlement limiting royal powers of appointment and the royal power to wage war independently. Ironically, this was less to guard against the threat of Catholic absolutism, than to protect the English taxpayer from the prospect of another Protestant warrior-prince like William succeeding to the throne. However, what the Revolution did not prevent was the possibility of legislative tyranny. The threat of an over-mighty parliament became a reality as the 1715 Septennial Act effectively destroyed the Revolution's commitment to regular elections.

THE END O
STUART



The articles of the Union of the Parliaments of England and Scotland are presented to Queen Anne by the Duke of Queensbury in 1707

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The end of the Stuarts



Edmund Lilly's 1703 portrait of Queen Anne. Following the 1707 Acts of Union, she would be queen of Great Britain and Ireland

DAUGHTER AND HEIR

Although hers would be the final reign of the Stuart dynasty, Queen Anne was, as **Tracy Borman** argues, a much more popular monarch than her predecessor William III

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The fact that Queen Anne was the last of the Stuarts was due to an extraordinary, and tragic, quirk of fate. By the time of her accession in March 1702, she had been pregnant no fewer than 17 times, though only five children were born alive, and all of those died in infancy. Her son William, Duke of Gloucester, lived the longest, dying in 1700 at the age of 11.

The same reproductive misfortune had befallen Anne's sister, Mary, who had also failed to produce an heir – if she had, then Anne would not have come to the throne upon William III's death on 8 March 1702. The two women were daughters of James II by his first wife, Anne Hyde. The future Queen Anne's birth had taken place on 6 February 1665 during the reign of her uncle, Charles II.

At the time, there seemed little prospect of Anne's inheriting the throne. Charles II had fathered numerous illegitimate children and there was little reason to suppose that his marriage to Catherine of Braganza would not result in a legitimate one. But his queen remained barren and, upon his death in 1685, he was obliged to leave the throne to his brother, Anne's father, James. Anne was now second in line to the throne, but James had remarried after his first wife's death and his second wife, Mary of Modena, was proving a fertile one. Ironically, when she gave birth to a son in 1688, it ought to have removed any prospect of Mary and Anne inheriting the throne. In fact, it brought them to it. By then, James II had so alienated his people that the prospect of a new son and heir continuing his dogmatic and absolutist policies was too much to bear. James was duly ousted from power and replaced by his protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange.

James never gave up the idea of reclaiming the throne for himself or his son, and the 'Jacobite' movement would remain a thorn in both Mary and Anne's side throughout their respective reigns. Nevertheless, Anne's accession in 1702 was a peaceful one – even if it had only been decided upon the year before. The death of her longest-surviving child, William, duke of Gloucester, in 1700 had thrown the succession into question. William III had adored the boy and had intended him as his heir. Anne was the next natural choice, but her gender and the fact that William disliked her made it possible that the throne would revert to the male Stuart line in the form of James II's son. But James Francis Edward Stuart was as rigidly Catholic as his father had been and this proved the deciding factor. In 1701, Parliament passed the Act of Settlement, reaffirming the principle that a Roman Catholic should never be monarch.

Charm offensive

Anne was 37 at the time of her accession. She had never been a great beauty like her sister Mary, but she was a handsome woman. Her numerous pregnancies had taken their toll on her figure, though, and her widening girth would become ever more pronounced during the years that followed. It contributed to the gout that plagued her from her mid-thirties and which left her barely able to walk, often resorting to sedan chairs, wheelchairs and walking sticks. One uncharitable observer remarked: 'Nature seems to be inverted when a poor infirm woman becomes one of the rulers of the world.'

But Anne made up for her physical deficiencies with the power of her personality. She had inherited the charm of her late uncle, Charles II, and had the popular touch that William III had so markedly lacked. When she gave her first speech to Parliament three days after her accession, she won widespread acclaim for declaring: 'I know my heart to be entirely English.' It was exactly what her naturally xenophobic people wanted to hear after being ruled by a Dutchman for eight years.

As well as her gift for public relations, Anne possessed another attribute which made her subjects delight in their new queen. She was firmly committed to the Protestant Anglican Church, so there was no question that she would try to inflict her father's despised brand of dogmatic Catholicism upon the nation. She also combined the perfect blend of a high regard for the ancient ceremonies and pageantry of the crown with a firm commitment to a modernised monarchy. During her reign, the notion of a constitutional monarchy, in which the sovereign reigned and the ministers ruled, was consolidated, thereby laying the foundations for the modern state of Britain.

Although she presented a welcome change to her predecessor, Anne upheld most of William's policies – including his aggression towards France. Barely two months after her accession, the Grand Alliance of Britain, the Netherlands, the Empire and the German princes declared war on Louis XIV. Anne's choice of commander was inspired. John Churchill had been dismissed from court by William III, but appointed captain of the forces towards the end of his reign. The fact that Anne retained him in this post was due not just to his undoubted qualities as a military leader, but to the fact that his wife Sarah was the queen's best friend.

Losing her mother at the age of six and being separated from her father because of his conversion to Catholicism had made Anne reserved and lonely. She had subsequently forged a number of close friendships with women, and by far the most significant and enduring was that with Sarah. In the countless letters they wrote to each other, they assumed the pseudonyms of Mrs Morley (Anne) and Mrs Freeman (Sarah). William III's dislike for the Churchills had prompted him to



William was Anne's only child to survive infancy, but died when he was eleven

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demand that Anne dismiss them from her household. When Anne refused, her brother -in-law had been furious and their relationship had never recovered.

As soon as she was queen, Anne wasted no time in appointing Sarah to the vaulted position of Groom of the Stole and head of the royal bedchamber. John, meanwhile, was given a plethora of military commands, as well as being made ambassador extraordinary to the Dutch Republic. He excelled in the latter post, freeing the Dutch from French domination, and winning himself the dukedom of Marlborough. His victory at Blenheim in 1704 inspired the building of his magnificent Oxfordshire palace of the same name.

Committed queen

Despite her poor health, Anne was assiduous in all of her duties as queen. She wrote letters to her fellow heads of state by hand, which must have been a challenge given that as well as gout in her hands, she had poor eyesight. One of the greatest achievements of her reign was the Act of Union, which came into effect on 1 May 1707. This united England and Scotland into a single state and parliament. It had been hard won: relations between the two kingdoms had been increasingly hostile, not least because of Scotland's support of the Jacobite cause. In 1703, the Scottish Parliament had passed the Act of Security, which decreed that the next monarch of Scotland need not be the same person as the successor to the English throne. England's Parliament retaliated with the Alien Act, which banned all of the major Scottish export trades south of the border. It followed this up with a proposal "that the two kingdoms of England and Scotland be for ever United into one kingdom by the name of Great Britain". Threatened by the loss of their lucrative trade, the Scots relented and the union was forged.

The following year was a turbulent one for Anne. The overweening influence of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough had caused widespread resentment across the court and country – in particular among the Tories, against whom the Whiggish Sarah had ceaselessly conspired.

By 1708, the queen herself was tiring of the Duchess's domineering and high-handed manner. On 19 August, the simmering hostility suddenly erupted when the two women shared a coach to St Paul's Cathedral for a service of thanksgiving for Marlborough's victory at Oudenarde. Earlier, Anne had refused to wear the cumbersome jewels that Sarah had laid out for her and, as she stepped out of the coach, Sarah was heard to hiss 'Be quiet' to her royal mistress. She had gone too far. Anne never forgave this insult to her majesty and ended the friendship immediately.



This Victorian illustration shows Sarah, duchess of Marlborough, scolding Queen Anne. Though they were close friends, the queen eventually tired of Sarah's rude manner

"Anne combined the perfect blend of a high regard for the **ancient ceremonies of the crown** with a firm commitment to a **modernised monarchy**"

Two months later, Queen Anne's adored husband, Prince George of Denmark, died. In every other respect than producing heirs, theirs had been a successful marriage, marked by mutual love and affection. In her loneliness, Anne forged a close friendship with another female courtier, Abigail Masham. Modest and undemanding, she formed a welcome contrast to Sarah Churchill, who flew into a jealous rage and accused the queen of conducting a lesbian affair with her new friend and confidante.

Tired of the crippling expense and loss of life that the protracted war with France had exacted, and no longer cajoled into supporting her chief commander, Anne dismissed Marlborough in December 1711 and made peace with France. A treaty was formally agreed in 1713 and England emerged triumphant. Despite the heavy losses that she had suffered, she was now more powerful militarily than France and more commercially effective than the Netherlands.

Anne did not long savour her victory. She died on 1 August 1714, aged just 49, after suffering two violent strokes. Her Tory ministers secretly offered the crown to James II's son on condition that he convert to Protestantism. He refused and the crown passed peacefully to George Louis, Elector of Hanover, as decreed in the 1701 Act of Settlement and confirmed by the Act of Union six years later. The turbulent century of Stuart rule was at an end.

Tracy Borman is an author and historian. Her latest book, *Thomas Cromwell*, is published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2014

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John Wooton's 1704 painting of the battle of Blenheim. The duke of Marlborough's victory inspired a palace to be built

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THE UNION OF 1707

In Scotland, the 1707 Union with England was greeted with furious protests and accusations of betrayal. **Christopher Whatley** examines the motives of Scottish MPs for supporting the creation of a United Kingdom

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The 1707 Articles of Union from the House of Lords Records Office, and a 1754 engraving, after an earlier original, of them being presented to Anne I

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Trade was a driving force behind the union 'yes' vote

The collapse of the Scottish colonial venture at Darien in Central America (with the loss of many lives and a substantial amounts of money) turned many Scots against King William and England. With some justification, both were blamed for the disaster, although there were other, more significant, causes, including Spanish hostility. A minority argued that only through union with England and access thereby to England's colonies would the Scots achieve their ambition of expanding overseas trade, the "golden ball" sought by most European nations. A union of trade with England had long been a Scottish aim, although as part of a federal arrangement. With a navy in 1703 comprising only three armed vessels for protection, Scotland's merchant marine was vulnerable to attacks from French privateers – although the seizure of the Scottish ship *Annandale* by the English in 1704 further exacerbated Anglo-Scottish tensions. In 1706, even opposition MPs voted for the fourth Article of Union, which not only secured access to the plantations within the umbrella of the Navigation Acts, but also kept open the important market for Scottish goods in England itself. Scotland's economy at the turn of the 18th century was in dire straits and had been sinking from the 1680s. The balance of payments was deeply in deficit, coin was in short supply and the state machine was badly under-funded and near to collapse.



A map showing John Speed's 'Kingdome of Scotland' in 1662

In a packed St Paul's Cathedral on 1 May 1707, William Talbot, Bishop of Oxford, preached a weighty sermon on the advantages of unity between peoples. The occasion was the inauguration of the Act of Union that now bound together the nations of England and Scotland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

For most of those there – as well as the massed crowds on the streets outside – the Act had come as a blessed relief. Despite being bound together by the Union of the Crowns, during the years preceding 1707, relations between the two nations had deteriorated to the extent that armed conflict was seriously considered. The Union removed the immediate cause of inter-national tension: the unwillingness of the Scots to go along with the English Act of Settlement of 1701, which had decreed that Anne's successor should be the Protestant Electress of Hanover, Princess Sophia.

There were Scots who shared in England's joy. A few, led by James Douglas, the Duke of Queensberry, the queen's commissioner in Scotland, were in London at the time, basking in the public's adulation. But they were in a minority. In Edinburgh, the mood was sombre. During the debates in the Scottish parliament about the union, angry crowds had rioted. These included Jacobites (supporters of James Francis, son of James II and VII) who wanted no truck with a union that dented their hopes of a Stuart restoration. The crowds also included nationalists, protesting furiously against the loss of Scotland's ancient sovereignty. Also angry were staunch Presbyterians; the church on both sides of the border was Protestant, but this group felt that Scotland's Presbyterian church government (ruled by elders) was threatened by that of the Anglican Church of England which was episcopalian (ruled by bishops).

To counter a rumour that the Scottish crown, along with the sword and sceptre of state, were to be taken to England, government ministers hastily amended the 24th Article of Union to exclude the possibility of this happening – ever. Rather than being received joyously, when the Articles were finally ratified in Parliament, the less than full chamber had resounded to the loud theatrical cry of "No" from the leader of the country opposition.

Evidence of this sort has led Scottish historians in recent decades to argue that the Union was pressed on the unwilling Scots by England and approved by unprincipled Scottish MPs who betrayed their countrymen and women in return for pensions, government posts and promises of honours. Had this not done the trick, England would have sent troops into Scotland and forced the Edinburgh Parliament's hand. Extreme exponents of these explanations for the Union even deny that the Scots acceded to incorporation in return for free trade and access to England's colonies – denouncing this argument as a Victorian "invention". Such concessions, it is asserted, were unnecessary, the evidence that Scots sought such ends thin on the ground.

With the tercentenary of the Union of 1707 approaching, a research project at the University of Dundee was begun in 2002, one aim of which was to put to the test claims that Scottish MPs who supported the Union were, in the words of Scots poet Robert Burns later in the century, a "parcel of rogues". Derek Patrick, whose University of St Andrews PhD was on the Glorious Revolution in Scotland, was employed not

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only to examine afresh the well-worn sources used by previous scholars, but also to search out new materials: these included little-used letters written to and from politicians who opposed union in 1706–7 (but, significantly, not necessarily earlier), along with the papers and private and political diaries and notebooks of the lesser MPs, the supporters rather than the leaders. A key task was to create a database of pro-Union voters, to trace their personal and family backgrounds and to reconstruct as comprehensively as possible the circumstances which formed their political beliefs. The results were surprising.

Staunchly pro-union

What is striking is how many of the 227 MPs or their descendants who sat in the Scottish Parliament in 1706–7 had been exiled in the Low Countries under the later Stuarts and who either returned with William of Orange when he landed at Torbay in 1688 or served him in the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1689 and its successor Parliament. It was from this cohort of around 107 MPs that some of the staunchest supporters of the Union were drawn, including: John Dalrymple, first earl of Stair, the principal government speaker in the union cause; Patrick Hume, first earl of Marchmont, influential member of the pro-union new party; and David Melville, third earl of Leven, a prominent economic moderniser who was governor of the Bank of Scotland from 1697, and by 1707 commander-in-chief of the army in Scotland. Evidence suggests

"The union looked to be a 'fair bargain'; with peace, security of religion... and free trade"

too that the court, or government, party's much-maligned leaders, James Douglas, second duke of Queensberry and John Cambell, second duke of Argyll, were on a "Revolution foot", that is supporters of the Glorious Revolution in Scotland.

What such individuals had in common was their Presbyterianism, in which cause some of those concerned had endured exile and sometimes worse, and a determination to secure the Revolution settlement in Scotland. It was an "entire" or incorporating union they believed – as early as 1689 when it was first mooted from Scotland – that would best serve their purpose. In this the supporters of union were principled, consistent and persistent: the trio of Stair, Adam Cockburn of Ormiston and the first earl of Seafield were appointed as commissioners to negotiate union in 1689, 1702 and 1706.

The international context in which the Union was forged was one in which British forces and those of her allies were locked into a lengthy war with Catholic France, a formidable enemy under Louis XIV, whose vision was of French universal monarchy. Moderate Presbyterians feared that a divided mainland Britain would make Scotland vulnerable to French aggrandisement, and militant Jacobitism.

To varying degrees too there was, among the Scottish elite, an emergent sense of Britishness, particularly among MPs who had served in William's and then Anne's armies in Europe: the mood was captured by William Aikman, the Scots-born portrait painter who was in London during May 1707 and informed his uncle that "we are no more Scots and English but all bold Brittains". The rejection of economic considerations in the making of the Union seems perverse. Many Scottish MPs – of all parties – recognised how parlous Scotland's pre-Union financial condition was. Many were convinced that union with England offered the best remedy – provided that the Scots could negotiate access to England's colonies, a long-held ambition in Scotland.

A fair bargain

In addition, the compensation won for the investors in the partly patriotically driven Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies – who had lost fortunes after the collapse in 1699 of the Company's attempt to establish a Scottish trading colony at Darien near the isthmus of Panama – were powerful inducements. The sum of nearly £400,000 sterling – called the Equivalent – has been condemned as a national bribe. But these economic elements of the Union were concessions, prised from England whose union commissioners during the failed negotiations in 1702–3 had been unwilling to accede to Scottish demands.

FOR AND AGAINST

Taking sides in the union debate

Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, first earl of Marchmont (1641-1724)

A devout Presbyterian, under the Stuarts Hume had suffered imprisonment and exile. At the Revolution in Scotland in 1689 he had advocated incorporation. Marchmont was a prominent member of the "squadrone volante", whose two dozen votes in securing the Union were crucial.

Queen Anne (1665-1714)

Anne was fairly consistent in her support for a union. She took a close interest in the proceedings of the commissioners from both countries who met in 1706 to negotiate its terms.

Rev William Carstares (1649-1715)

A moderate Presbyterian minister and émigré appointed by William of Orange as his royal chaplain, Carstares became a key figure in William's government. Hostile to the Episcopalians (who were invariably Jacobites), he worked assiduously during 1706 to persuade waverers within the Church of Scotland to drop their opposition to the Union.

James, fourth Duke of Hamilton (1658-1712)

Leader of the country party opposition, the main opposition to the court or government party, He spoke against Union, but at key moments acted in ways that benefited the court. That, in 1704, he could declare "they are not good Brittains" who would "make a treaty difficult" raises questions about the sincerity of his opposition.

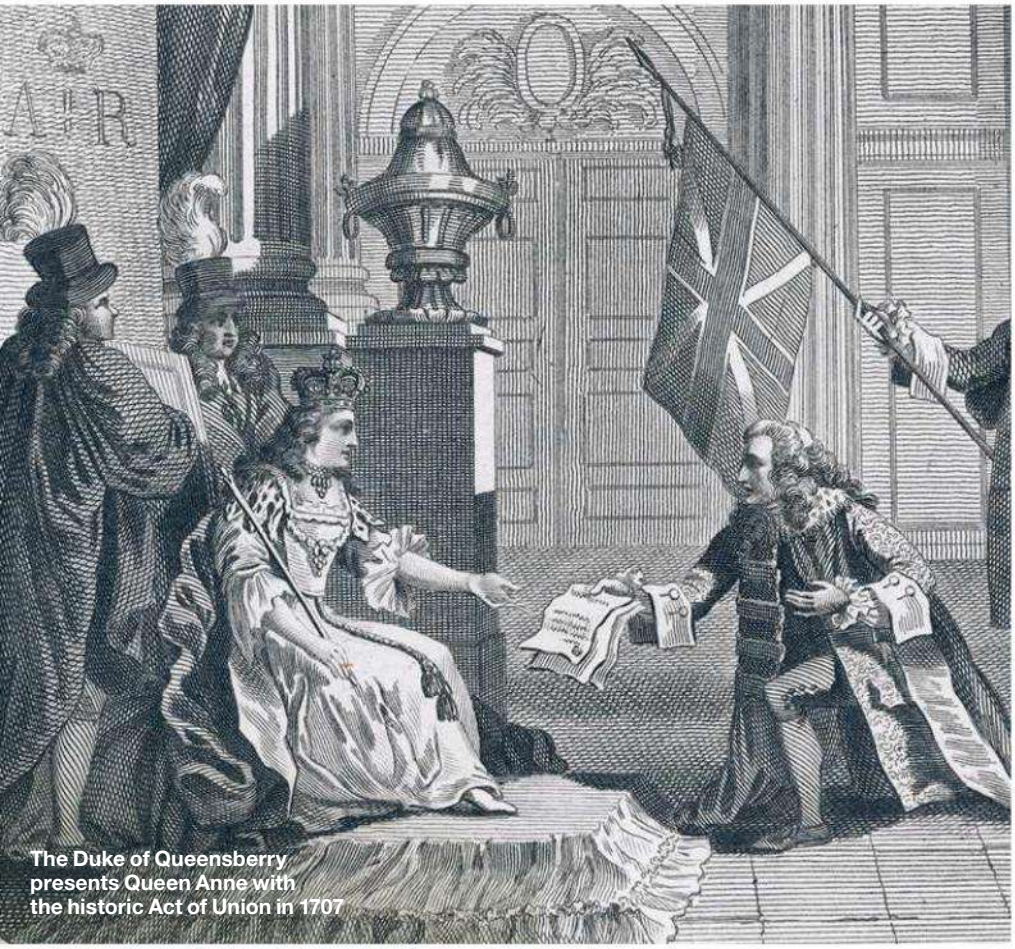
George Lockhart of Carnwath (1681-1731)

MP for Midlothian from 1703, Lockhart alleged in his 1714 memoirs that Scottish politicians were bribed to support the Union. Furthermore, he revealed that leading unionists were principled pro-Revolution Presbyterians and supporters of the House of Hanover, all of which the Jacobite Lockhart hated with a vengeance.



The Duke of Hamilton was the leader of the country opposition party

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The Duke of Queensberry presents Queen Anne with the historic Act of Union in 1707

MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY/ALAMY

New party members of the patriotic opposition in Scotland, who had attacked government ministers from the time of the flight from Darien, saw things similarly. Typical was William Bennet of Grubbet, a Williamite who had sided with the opposition for several years but early in 1706 reflected that union looked to be a "fair bargain"; with peace, security of religion and compensation for Darien and free trade, he saw "the end of our journey". Few Scots were entirely comfortable with an arrangement which sacrificed their nation's parliamentary independence, but pragmatic patriots like John Clerk of Penicuik recognised that in an age of muscular mercantilism, Scottish sovereignty was more apparent than real. If Scotland was to flourish, union with England looked to him and many other MPs as the best way forward.

The practicalities of merging the two countries' administrative systems, including the coinage, weights and measures and taxation, proved more difficult than expected. Economic benefits promised to and anticipated by the Scots were slow to materialise. Over time, however, they managed to make the Union work to their advantage. Together, the peoples of the United Kingdom forged the British Empire and in the 19th century established Britain as the workshop of the world. The Union's integrity came under increasing challenge in the later 20th century, but the evolving Union still remains intact – for now. It was as the benefits of the Union became less obvious to Scots that nationalist historians in particular developed their critique of the manner in which it was arrived at, relying in part on the partisan evidence of contemporary Jacobite opponents like George Lockhart of Carnwath. From the 1960s, too, there has been a reaction against the previously dominant portrayals of pro-Union politicians in Scotland in 1706–7 as visionary statesmen.

In 2014, few in Scotland will accord their unionist forefathers this kind of heroic status. However, the fresh research reported here makes clear that there were thoughtful, English-speaking Scots Protestants who were concerned for their divided nation. They judged that union under a single monarch with their wealthier, militarily stronger neighbour, with whom they shared the same island, offered security and a context within which the Scots could achieve the material success that they believed underpinned European civilisation. H

Christopher A Whatley is professor of Scottish history and former vice-principal and head of arts and social sciences at Dundee University. *The Scots and the Union,* written with Derek Patrick, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2006

THE UNION OF 1707

1688–89
Flight of the Catholic James II and VII. Crowns of Scotland and England offered – separately – to **William of Orange and Mary**

1695
Subscription books for the **Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies** are opened.

1700
Rumours of **retreat of Scottish settlers** from the Company's colony at Darien, near Panama are confirmed.

1701
Westminster passes the **Act of Settlement**. With no surviving children, Anne, William's likely successor, is to be succeeded by Sophia, the Protestant Electress of Hanover. The Scots are not consulted.

1702
William dies and **the throne passes to Anne**

1703
A general election in Scotland returns a parliament with an opposition coalition comprising many more Jacobites, and a nationalist tone

1704
Act of Security passed in Scotland. The act insisted that, unless England granted the Scots certain concessions, they would decide their own successor

1705
A nadir in Anglo-Scottish relations. The hanging takes place on Leith sands of the captain and crew members of the English vessel *Worcester* in retaliation for the seizure of a Scottish ship the previous year

1706
Union commissioners from both countries **meet in London to discuss terms.** Concerns in Scotland about what has been agreed. Disorder grows

1707
The **25 Articles of Union** are ratified by the Scottish Parliament, followed by Westminster. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain** is inaugurated

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“Kings are justly called gods for they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth”

James VI and I